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Small Public Library Buildings

*' A.L.A. Committee on
Library Architecture and Building Planning
1937-1938*

John Adams Lowe, Rochester Public Library, Rochester, N. Y., Chairman

Francis F. L. D. Goodrich, College of the City of New York, New York

Chalmers Hadley, Cincinnati Public Library, Cincinnati

Edna Ruth Hanley, Agnes Scott College Library, Decatur, Ga.

Thure H. Lindberg, Snead and Company, Jersey City

William H. Randall, Graduate Library School, University of Chicago, Chicago

Carl Vitz, Minneapolis Public Library, Minneapolis

William Webb, Flint Public Library, Flint, Mich.

Small Public Library Buildings

PREPARED FOR THE
A.L.A. COMMITTEE ON LIBRARY ARCHITECTURE
AND BUILDING PLANNING

BY
JOHN ADAMS LOWE, CHAIRMAN

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Published February 1939

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Planning a Building . . .

THE demand for floor plans of successful public library buildings grows with the stimulus to building activities fostered by the federal government. Each building should be an evolution in itself based on local conditions, needs and resources, not a copy of another. These few plans and pictures are presented in the hope that they will suggest to building committees or Library Trustees some ideas which may be applied to their own problem. The chances are that no one of these buildings, just as it is, fits exactly the need of any other municipality. That is as it should be. Each structure should have a character and an identity entirely its own.

These plans indicate a definite trend away from the stereotyped buildings of a decade ago. Their patterns are less institutional. Inviting interiors replace cold, stiff cell-like rooms. Greater convenience is provided rather than the lack of it, and in many of the plans maintenance costs very obviously were a determining factor. Everywhere there is evidence of the possibilities of better planning and more satisfactory construction because of the new materials now available. Some of the branch buildings shown are so carefully designed and planned and so thoroughly equipped that although they are intended for neighborhood service in large city areas, they are

readily adaptable for a small unit library in a smaller community.

A brief outline of the procedure of making a plan may give the pictorial matter further significance.

Building Committee

The Building Committee is that group of persons charged with the responsibility for the planning and construction of the building. This group represents the government, the Trustees or the donor, and it is of utmost importance that the authority of the committee so constituted be established before any step is taken. Its duties must be outlined, and its relations to the financial official and to the architect made clear to all. It acts as a unit; a single member has no authority to give orders or make changes in plans except that given by the Committee. It is usually made up of members of the Library Trustees, but it may be augmented by those who have important skill or information to add.

The first obligation of the Committee is to itself. That is to assure itself that the proposed library building is needed, is warrantable from every standpoint, that funds are available to erect a satisfactory structure adequately to meet the needs, and that funds will be available to maintain it. This final checkup of the whole proposition

may convince a half-hearted board of the soundness of the proposition. It may save everyone concerned future criticism for unwarranted extravagance. It is often wise to begin a library in a room of a municipal building or in a rented room in a favorable location, or to remodel an old structure and grow out of that, than to begin with a campaign for a library building, before people have learned to value and use the library. Many a separate library building in a small town has proven to be a white elephant. A gift building may lay too heavy a burden upon a small community because of its maintenance, to have warranted its acceptance.

Librarian

Even for the smallest structure a librarian and an architect are indispensable. Consultation between the architect, Librarian and Building Committee of the Trustees should begin with the very inception of the plan, and continue through every stage of its development. The Librarian can thus present the needs of the service before any preconceived plan is formulated, and continue to emphasize the particular needs as the plan develops.

Trustees beginning library service with the new building should employ an experienced and trained librarian before the drawing of any plans is made. The mistake of waiting until the building is finished and then choosing a librarian may cause unnecessary expense in changes which must be made later. The Board will be well re-

paid for the salary expenditure in advice and direction of the work.

Architect

The choice of the architect is most important. This is the duty of the Library Trustees and should be done without regard to personal interest. He should be selected upon the sole basis of his proven fitness. Beware of him who shows beautiful wash drawings without plans and specifications, and of him who wishes to begin to build before every last detail of the plan is complete. Any capable architect who has designed and built both artistic and substantial public buildings may make a good choice, but it is desirable if possible to secure one who has successfully built other public library buildings. Such experience will have given him some conception of the needs of the library he plans. Each year it becomes easier to find architects who have the answer to libraries' problems. Happy relationships between committee and architect are the usual occurrence. Through discussion and conference, with frank interchange of opinion and criticism, successful results are achieved.

Problem

It is the function of the Committee and the Librarian to state the problem, outline the needs and indicate types of service intended to be rendered in the building. The architect is asked for his solution. The Committee should not tell the architect how he is to do it, but rather to point out what it

wants and leave the result to him. When the architect produces his solution, the first draft of the plan, the Committee and the Librarian check it over carefully in every detail to make sure that the building will actually do what is indicated. Then Committee and architect make criticisms and changes, but stay with it until it is as nearly perfect and complete as possible. The specifications and working drawings are made, contracts drawn, let, and construction begins.

The site has a definite bearing on the plan. If it is well located it will be accessible conveniently to the majority of the community. In a city it may well be placed in the heart of the shopping district. The surrounding neighborhood should be desirable and give promise of remaining so for years to come. The railway station yard and the main automobile highway are not the most feasible locations although they satisfy the desire of town boosters and advertisers. Street "improvements," sidewalks, curbs, sewer, water, gas and electricity constitute important considerations in figuring the cost of a lot in newly developed neighborhoods. Even if improvements are all in, make sure that all assessments against the improvements have been paid by applying to the proper municipal authorities.

Light is a factor most essential to the success of the building. A lot should therefore be wide enough to permit ample space for windows in the side walls. A corner lot is advantageous for continuous daylight, accessibility and prominence. A narrow lot, however, in a good but crowded

location may be successfully handled by use of light wells or a narrow court. A slope in the ground to the rear or at one side may permit space for a light, airy basement. A lot sloping upward from the front offers difficulties with terraces, steps or other problems.

Texture of the soil plays a part. To blast a ledge or fill in a clay bog increases expense. The item of grading is of great importance and must not be omitted as a cost item. If trees are on the lot consider very carefully the placing of the building before removing them. Trees enhance the beauty of the property, public and private. Include in the cost estimate how much may have to be spent in planting shrubs and trees to make an otherwise barren lot attractive.

The selection of a site is closely related in the minds of the public with possibilities for public parking of automobiles. The Committee must face the issue squarely at the outset. Either the Library provides a parking field properly constructed and constantly supervised for 12 hours a day by a competent driver, and plans for the expense of such maintenance in the annual budget, or it does not assume any responsibility for the parking of its users' cars. Experience shows a pretty theory to be disappointing and expensive in the practice of attempting to provide parking facilities. Many a library has had to put up gates to keep clear the area intended for delivery of express and supplies. All-day parkers who work in the neighborhood preempt the space. Experience would seem to indicate that no appreciable curtailment of the use

of the library building comes from the failure to provide a public parking field.

Before any planning can be undertaken, the Board must have determined three factors, each of which is dependent upon the other—**size, quality and cost**. If any two of these is known, the third can readily be determined. For example: if the Building Committee has decided that there must be a certain minimum space for shelving books, a minimum space for readers, for administration, for special rooms and special services, the first factor is known. If then the quality of labor and the material to be used in construction is decided upon, the second factor is revealed. Then it follows that a building of such size and of such quality will cost so much. Such a procedure precedes a request from the municipal authority for funds by appropriation or bond issue. It is of course equally sound as a basis for a solicitation for a gift or a bequest.

If, on the other hand, a bequest or gift has been made, the cost is settled. But if in addition the donor requires that the building be of fireproof construction, there is little to be done about the size, for it can be no greater than the contractor will build for that amount.

Cost

One method of estimating the amount needed for a building is based on the population to be served. The American Library Association sets as a standard for a book collection reasonably adequate in quantity, that a library in a city of 100,000 inhabitants or over should have at least one and

one-half volumes per capita; in a city of 10,000 to 99,000, two books per capita; and in a city of less than 10,000, three books per capita. It has been estimated that the cost of housing a book collection, including all the other elements of an adequate library, is \$2 a volume. The life of a building is about 20 to 30 years, and therefore space should be provided for a normal growth, at least for 20 years. As a formula, multiply the estimated population of the community 20 years hence by the standard volumes per capita and multiply by \$2 per volume. In other words, a community of 20,000, growing normally, will probably double its population in 20 years, and the book supply should be figured at 80,000 volumes. A building at \$2 per volume would cost \$160,000.

Size

The cost of construction may be appropriated as follows:

General construction	57%
Plumbing, heating, wiring and fixtures	13%
Shelving and equipment	20%
Architect's fees and contingencies	10%

Preliminary building estimates are usually made on the basis of cubic contents. Costs vary from time to time and from place to place to such a degree that it is difficult to set an exact figure for a standard cost per cubic foot. The architect should be able to estimate fairly readily such a figure for the particular building under construction.

The type of construction and the quality of the materials to be used enter into the

determination of the cost per cubic foot. "Strictly fireproof" construction is too expensive for the ordinary public library building, and is required only for housing of treasure libraries. So-called fireproof or "first-class" construction is practically as safe and far less expensive. "Semi-fireproof" calls for stud partitions with masonry floors and outer walls and spark-resisting roof. "Second-class" construction is wood framing with masonry exterior and the boiler room enclosed in a fireproof compartment. "Third-class" construction is wood framing and exterior, and is satisfactory only for the smallest rural units.

If the Building Committee should decide to have first-class construction, and if the architect should discover that it cost 45 cents a cubic foot, it is easy to estimate the size of the building which can be erected for the amount available.

Thus:

Appropriation for building . .	\$160,000
General construction 57% . .	91,200
Plumbing, etc. 13% . .	20,800
	<u>\$112,000</u>
\$112,000 at 45c per cu. ft.	248,888
cu. ft.	

This may be variously laid out in accordance with the plan determined upon.

The Plan

After the cost, the type of construction and the size have been determined, the next step is to lay out the plan and prepare for drawings and specifications. The interior

should be planned first but the design of the exterior will have a definite relation to it and will express its function. The Librarian will contribute largely to the former, and the architect almost entirely to the latter, but there will always be conference and cooperation in both.

At the outset the Building Committee of the Trustees and the Librarian should set down as definitely as possible the requirements of the problem of the plan. For a building, simple in layout, not complicated by divisional specialization or by structural stacks, intended to serve and give supervision over the greatest number of readers with the smallest staff, the committee might begin with something like the following list of **requirements**:

- A. Accommodations for four classes of readers and books, grouped together, or separated by partitions, screens, or only by bookshelving.
 1. Fiction and popular books (indicate number of volumes) on shelves open to the public, with a few seats where books may be glanced through.
 2. Reading and reference space for adults; seats and tables (give number of readers at one time); books in wall shelving (include approximate number of volumes).
 3. Similar accommodation for high school students, separated but supervised (how many readers and volumes?).

4. Children's room, space for reading and for low wall shelving (estimate number of readers and volumes).
- B. One public entrance and one large desk for lending and returning books and for registering all classes of borrowers.
- C. Administration, consisting of two small rooms for work in the preparation of books and for the Librarian's office.
- D. Small staff room for rest and luncheon with kitchenette, locker room and toilet accessible (indicate number of staff members to be accommodated).
- E. Small space with outside doorway for receiving new books, unpacking and shipping. Supply room adjacent.
- F. Lecture hall or club study room, magazine reading room, story hour room, etc., as may be deemed essential.
- G. Small public toilet facilities under direct supervision.
- H. Basement, heating plant, miscellaneous storage.

The club room or lecture room may be placed here if there is proper light and adequate access to the outside without going through the reading and distributing rooms. Attic space may be similarly used if available. A basement lecture room requires special attention

to make it attractive. Avoid exposed pipes in the ceiling of this room.

After provision has been made for these items, and the relations of rooms have been indicated, the details of special types of shelving, of lighting, ventilation, floor covering, soundproofing, finish of walls, and the infinite details of furniture and equipment will demand endless attention. Each sort of planning comes in its own turn and follows logically from the steps that have gone before it. It is well to plan through to the end, even to placing furniture, before any construction is begun. As innocent a mistake as a poorly located light plug may cause a generation of workers annoyance and inefficiency.

Book Capacity

In estimating the total book capacity for which provision should be made, each of the following items must be considered:

1. Present book collection, number in each group.
 - a. Octavos
 - b. Quartos
 - c. Folios
 - d. Special Collection
2. Proportion of empty shelf space needed for immediate placing of new books in their order ($\frac{1}{3}$ is recommended).
3. Yearly accessions; loss and discarding for books; future bookstack extension (provision for 20 years' growth recommended).

In considering the space needed and sizes of the present book collection in Item No. 1 we find as follows:

- a. OCTAVOS: Average size 9" high, 7" deep, 1 3/4" wide.

A standard 3'-0" section or shelf is figured, by the manufacturers of book-stacks, from center to center of the shelf support. This reduces the actual length of the shelf to 2'-11"; after deducting the 3 1/2" clearance needed for the book support we actually have a maximum storage space of 2'-7 1/2" instead of 3'-0" as generally assumed.

One 2'-7 1/2" free shelf space storing average Octavos 1 3/4" wide will store 18 volumes. Therefore, in using the customary term of 3 foot shelf, 6 volumes per lineal foot should be used in calculating full maximum capacity.

- b. QUARTOS: Average size 11 1/2" to 15" high, 2" wide.

A double faced section will store 150 books at a maximum capacity, each section being equipped with 5 rows of nominal 3'-0" shelves.

c. FOLIOS:

Folios are shelved flat 2 volumes per shelf. Thirteen rows of shelf which equal 26 volumes are standard in a double faced section.

d. SPECIAL COLLECTION:

Any special book collection to be taken care of, not listed above, should be analyzed carefully in order to provide proper storage space.

The proportion of empty shelf space needed for immediate placing of new books, as pointed out in Item No. 2, in their proper order is determined by means of adding one third of the number of compartments to these already needed for full capacity storage in various classifications. (This is called Practical and Working Capacity.)

In allowing space for future expansion, as mentioned in Item No. 3, it is advisable to provide for a period of 20 years. It has been found that the book collection generally doubles itself every 20 years. Therefore, using the present book collection as a basis for calculation we find as follows:

1. Recapitulation of assumed book collection

a. Octavos	18,000 ÷ 252 =	72 Double faced Sections
b. Quartos	3,000 ÷ 150 =	20 Double faced Sections
c. Folios	390 ÷ 26 =	15 Double faced Sections
d. Special	2,000 ÷ 200 =	10 Double faced Sections
		<u>117 Double faced Sections</u>

2. Add to this 1/3 of 117 = 39 Double faced Sections
156 Double faced Sections

which means practical or working capacity from period of 5 to 7 years without too much shifting of books.

3. Now we have to provide for future expansion assuming 20 years' growth and collection doubling in 20 years.

As we have already added $\frac{1}{3}$ for immediate use, we now have to add $\frac{2}{3}$ of 117 for future expansion.

$$\frac{2}{3} \text{ of } 117 = \frac{156 \text{ Double faced Sections} + 78 \text{ Double faced Sections}}{234 \text{ Double faced Sections}}$$

are needed to provide for proper extension, say 20 years' growth, set on the assumed present book collection above (this will mean full capacity in 20 years), storing 46,780 volumes of various sizes.

A row of sections constitute a range. The spacing of ranges may differ depending on whether or not the stacks are open to the public or attendants only. If open to the public the ranges may be placed 6' from center to center giving a 4'-6" clear aisle. If open to attendants only it may be wise to place the ranges 4'-6" from center to center giving the space 3'-0" for aisles.

Book ranges in the stackroom are generally figured 7'-6" high from finished floor to finished floor. All shelves should be adjustable and not less than 8" deep figured to center of shelf support.

Book ranges placed in the different open reading rooms are generally 7'-0" and are equipped with adjustable shelves, 7 rows for each single faced compartment. If these ranges have backs or center partitions it may be advisable to make the shelves 10" deep.

Standard low shelving or ranges used in children's rooms are generally 5'-0" high

and equipped with 5 rows of adjustable shelves in each single face compartment.

Wood shelving and not steel bookstacks should be used in public reading rooms.

Floor space for readers is determined by the number of adults and children, seated in separate groups, with at least three quarters at tables. Allow 15 square feet per person at tables and 10 square feet in free-standing chairs. Allow a clear space of 5 feet between tables in case chairs are placed back to back. At table ends where no chairs are used, 3 feet 6 inches is sufficient. Between tables and walls leave space of 5 feet to allow for a row of chairs. Tables should allow a space of 30 inches for each reader.

Design

In exterior design the building should have dignity and create a sense of greater permanence than most commercial structures and dwellings. It should express the best architectural tradition of the region which can stand the test of time. The entrance should express hospitality and a welcome to him who has the will to read and study. Large windows so placed that readers may look out and that passersby may catch a glimpse of the activities within will increase a pleasant feeling of informality and even domesticity. The approach should be as easy as possible. A distance from the sidewalk of 20 feet is considered advisable for a setting and for the lessening of the disadvantages of noise and dirt from the street. Some buildings are recommended to be placed in the busy business section

of the city, and in such cases some have been erected on the sidewalk line in the same manner as a store or bank is located. Eliminate all steps possible to the entrance. Entrance at grade level is considered by some planners to be of greater advantage than space gained by building too high a basement and requiring people to climb steps to the entrance.

You will, of course, give attention to making the setting of the building appropriate. Avoid a building rising gaunt and naked with a flight of concrete steps, with no shrub to relieve the monotony and no vine or flowers to lend color to the drabness of the background. It is necessary in library planning to provide an exterior which is architecturally pleasing and inviting and the material of construction so adapted to its purpose that the cost of maintenance would be kept as low as possible. Buildings, like people, should be externally attractive if they are to be interesting—and above all this should apply to public buildings, which after all, but reflect the taste of the community.

The interior may be laid out in the most efficient plan for convenience and yet possess an element of beauty and friendliness which is very satisfying to readers. Modern sound engineers and sound-proofing materials, acoustic plaster and tiles, produce buildings and rooms vastly superior to those not so treated. The slight increase in cost is well worth the expenditure. Wood for wall covering is preferred to marble or stone because it gives a more homelike and restful effect. Wear resisting and sound ab-

sorbing floor covering materials are offered in great variety and excellent color. The new paints solve the problem of inexpensive and satisfactory wall decoration. Carefully chosen color for large unornamented wall spaces, a careful blending of a variety in the color of trim and furniture, and an appropriate pattern and color for the floors make possible bright, cheerful and sensibly decorated rooms. If the allowance for furnishings will permit Venetian blinds and simple fabric draperies at the windows and large prominent openings the interior will be in keeping with good taste for an up-to-date library.

Perhaps the greatest advance in building equipment has been made by lighting engineers. Glass tiles and glass bricks for the exterior use and artificial illuminating revolutionize building planning. Overhead light, direct and semi-indirect is preferable to fixtures on tables and desks. Well diffused light without shadows is available at no greater cost for installation and maintenance than the past generation has known.

Lighting plans should be carefully developed by engineers and their recommendations followed. Architects are prepared to determine amount of light and methods for producing it satisfactorily. Too many factors are involved for the librarian to try to determine this by deduction from other installations. Indirect lighting is theoretically most perfect, but not always the most economical to install or to maintain. Ceilings must be of the right color for reflecting light and diffusing it without glare, and

must be maintained at a high point of efficiency by frequent cleaning. The bulbs need to be replaced and any inconvenience in the process tends to make delay in changes. The light bowls must be cleaned frequently.

As much natural light as possible should be admitted to every part of all rooms. Windows should be as large as possible consistent with the outside wall space and interior wall arrangement. They may extend high in the ceiling, and should be low enough for outlook. The architect should plan the interior natural light needs first and adapt his exterior wall treatment to their requirements later. Too much light can be disastrous. Direct full sunlight shining into a reading room without being softened by blinds or curtains is detrimental to readers. It is too strong to be faced without glare and squinting. It casts violent shadows to contrast its brilliance. Natural light should be diffused with as much care as artificial light is. Expensive to build and uneconomical to maintain, skylights should be used only when necessary in large buildings and

should be designed if possible to admit north light. They leak and are difficult to keep clean and efficient for the purpose for which they were intended.

Air conditioning is considered essential in all large buildings. By this is meant the provision for a supply of fresh air that has been washed free of dust and heated or cooled as the need may require. Small units are available for buildings which provide a system whereby the flues which carry the warm air in the winter conduct the cold air in the summer.

The manner of today calls for simplicity. Omit all unnecessary decorations, over-mantels, over-counters, partitions, mock marble pillars and large hallways. Plan well proportioned rooms with books on the walls, small and few tables, an inviting "charging" desk, simple but adequate lighting as near the books and the people as possible, and a combination of colors in the walls that make for harmony. Then forget to put up the "Silence" signs of our older brothers and sisters, and let all the people who will come and talk about the books in an atmosphere of social happiness.

Cost and Size Data

LIBRARY	DATE	COST†	SIZE	BOOK CAPACITY	SEATING CAPACITY (READERS)
*Public Library, Belvedere Gardens East Los Angeles, California	1932	\$ 2,600	60 x 45	8,700	42
Montavilla Branch Portland, Oregon	1935	6,105	54 x 30	4,000	40
Brooks County Library Quitman, Georgia	1933	9,472	98 x 48	6,000	60
McKinley Branch Sacramento, California	1936	16,000	80 x 70	20,000	82
Bond Hill Branch Cincinnati, Ohio	1936	16,104	60 x 25	8,000	50
Public Library Wallkill, New York	1935	19,849	50 x 30	6,000	32
Myers Memorial Library Frewsburg, New York	1929	21,000	60 x 30	15,000	40
*Public Library Compton, California	1936	23,335	99 x 48	18,000	60
Thomas Branigan Memorial Las Cruces, New Mexico	1935	30,000	142 x 92	26,000	65
Danforth Branch Toronto, Canada	1930	34,814	110 x 40	13,000	39
*Public Library El Monte, California	1936	35,458	102 x 56	15,000	96
Runnymede Branch Toronto, Canada	1930	39,069	108 x 87	18,000	58
Glen Park Branch Gary, Indiana	1936	41,000	103 x 27	12,000	65
South Branch Oak Park, Illinois	1936	42,929	76 x 52	30,000	76
Toledo Heights Branch Toledo, Ohio	1935	44,100	89 x 69	20,000	100
Bennington Free Library Bennington, Vermont	1936	50,000	102 x 26	50,000	86
Rathbun Memorial Library East Haddam, Connecticut	1935	51,847	66 x 30	10,000	50
West Side Branch Massillon, Ohio	1937	53,000	74 x 72	9,000	80
Solano County Free Library Fairfield, California	1931	57,399	114 x 40	40,000	30
Waban Branch Newton, Massachusetts	1931	63,000	80 x 40	5,000	54
Ponca City Library Ponca City, Oklahoma	1935	75,000	122 x 92	50,000	160
Glendale Branch Queens Borough Public Library	1936	100,000	105 x 62	32,500	90
Martin Memorial Library York, Pennsylvania	1935	115,474	230 x 66	100,000	165
Public Library Lockport, New York	1937	140,000	110 x 95	45,000	130

*Operated as a Branch of the Los Angeles County Public Library.

†Includes construction, architect's fees and incidentals; excludes site, furniture and equipment.

List of Architects

ARCHITECT

ALBRECHT and WILHELM
Massillon, Ohio

HERMAN BROOKMAN
Portland, Oregon

W. F. BROOKS
Hartford, Connecticut

G. J. CANNON
Ponca City, Oklahoma

W. E. COFFMAN
Sacramento, California

F. G. DEMPWOLF
York, Pennsylvania

DENSMORE, LeCLEAR and ROBBINS
Boston, Massachusetts

FARRELL and MILLER
Los Angeles, California

GEORGE, MOORHOUSE and KING
Toronto, Canada

GEROW and CONKLIN
Toledo, Ohio

H. L. GOGERTY
Compton, California

LLOYD GREER
Valdosta, Georgia

J. PERCY HANFORD
Newburgh, New York

SAMUEL HANNAFORD
Cincinnati, Ohio

OLIVER R. JOHNSON
Jamestown, New York

JOHN M. LYLE
Toronto, Canada

PERCY McGHEE
El Paso, Texas

E. E. ROBERTS and E. C. ROBERTS
Chicago, Illinois

CARL SCHMILL and SON
Lockport, New York

STARKS and FLANDERS
HARRY J. DEVINE
Sacramento, California

HERBERT THORNTON TURNER
Elizabeth, New Jersey

G. E. TWEEDT
Bell, California

JOE H. WILDERMUTH
Gary, Indiana

GEORGE YOUNG
Bellaire, New York

LIBRARY BUILDING

West Side Branch
Massillon, Ohio

Montavilla Branch
Portland, Oregon

Rathbun Memorial Library
East Haddam, Connecticut

Ponca City Library
Ponca City, Oklahoma

Solano County Library
Fairfield, California

Martin Memorial Library
York, Pennsylvania

Waban Branch
Newton, Massachusetts

Public Library
El Monte, California

Danforth Branch
Toronto, Canada

Toledo Heights Branch
Toledo, Ohio

Public Library
Compton, California

Brooks County Library
Quitman, Georgia

Public Library
Wallkill, New York

Bond Hill Branch
Cincinnati, Ohio

Myers Memorial Library
Frewsburg, New York

Runnymede Branch
Toronto, Canada

Thomas Branigan Memorial Library
Las Cruces, New Mexico

South Branch
Oak Park, Illinois

Public Library
Lockport, New York

McKinley Branch
Sacramento, California

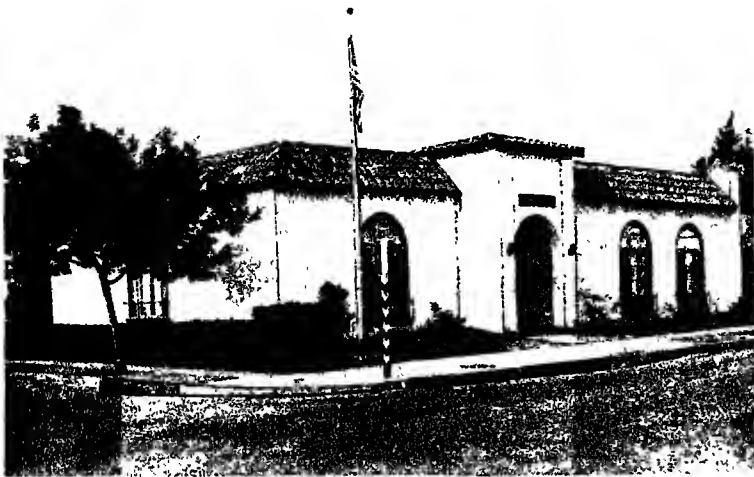
Bennington Free Library
Bennington, Vermont

Public Library, Belvedere Gardens
East Los Angeles, California

Glen Park Branch
Gary, Indiana

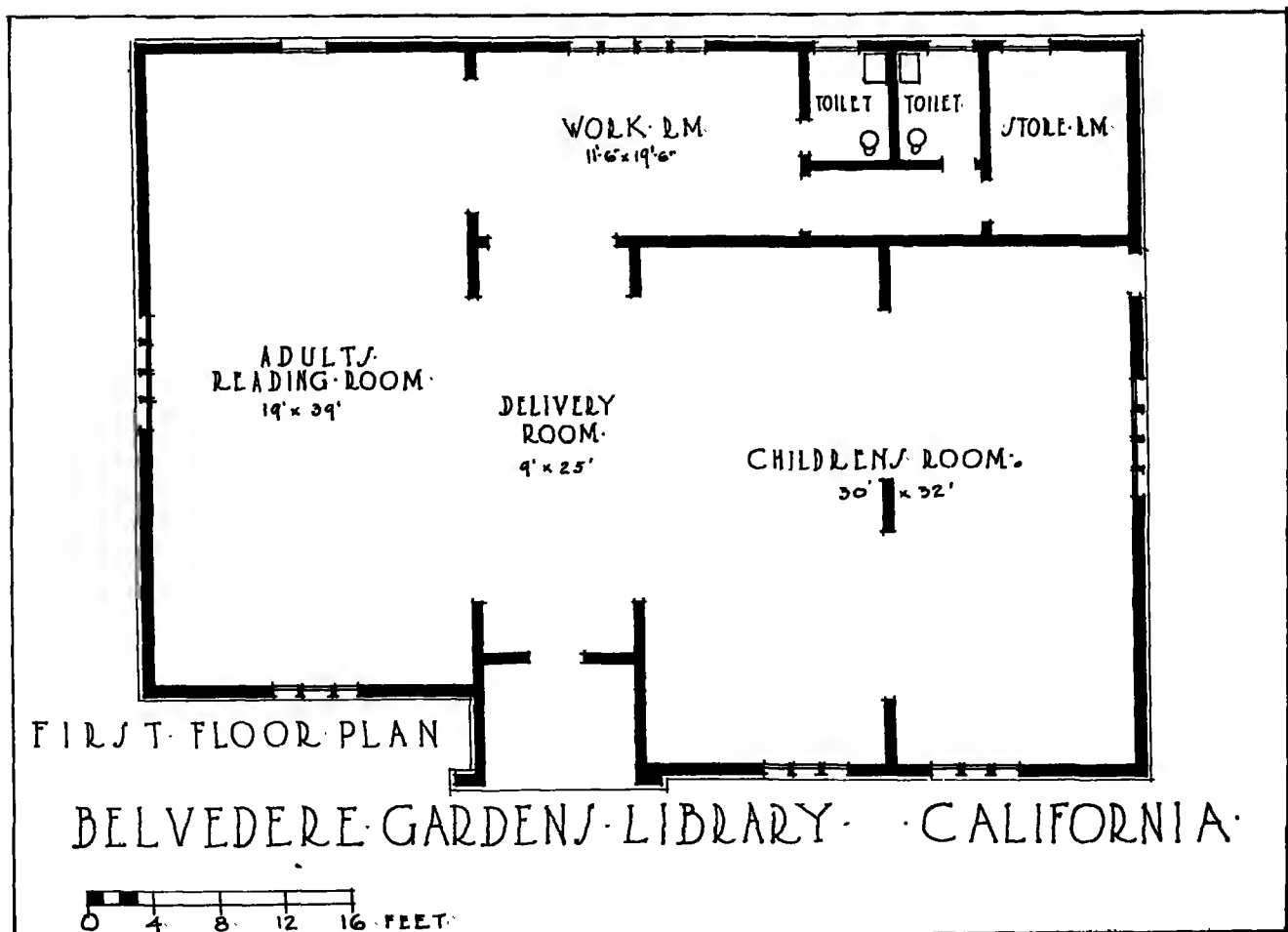
Glendale Branch
Queens Borough Public Library
Jamaica, New York

Public Library, Belvedere Gardens, East Los Angeles, California



Built according to the requirements of the Librarian of the Los Angeles County Public Library and rented to the County. This single unit plan furnishes maximum supervision by a minimum staff and a large shelving capacity. Windows have not been sacrificed to shelving.

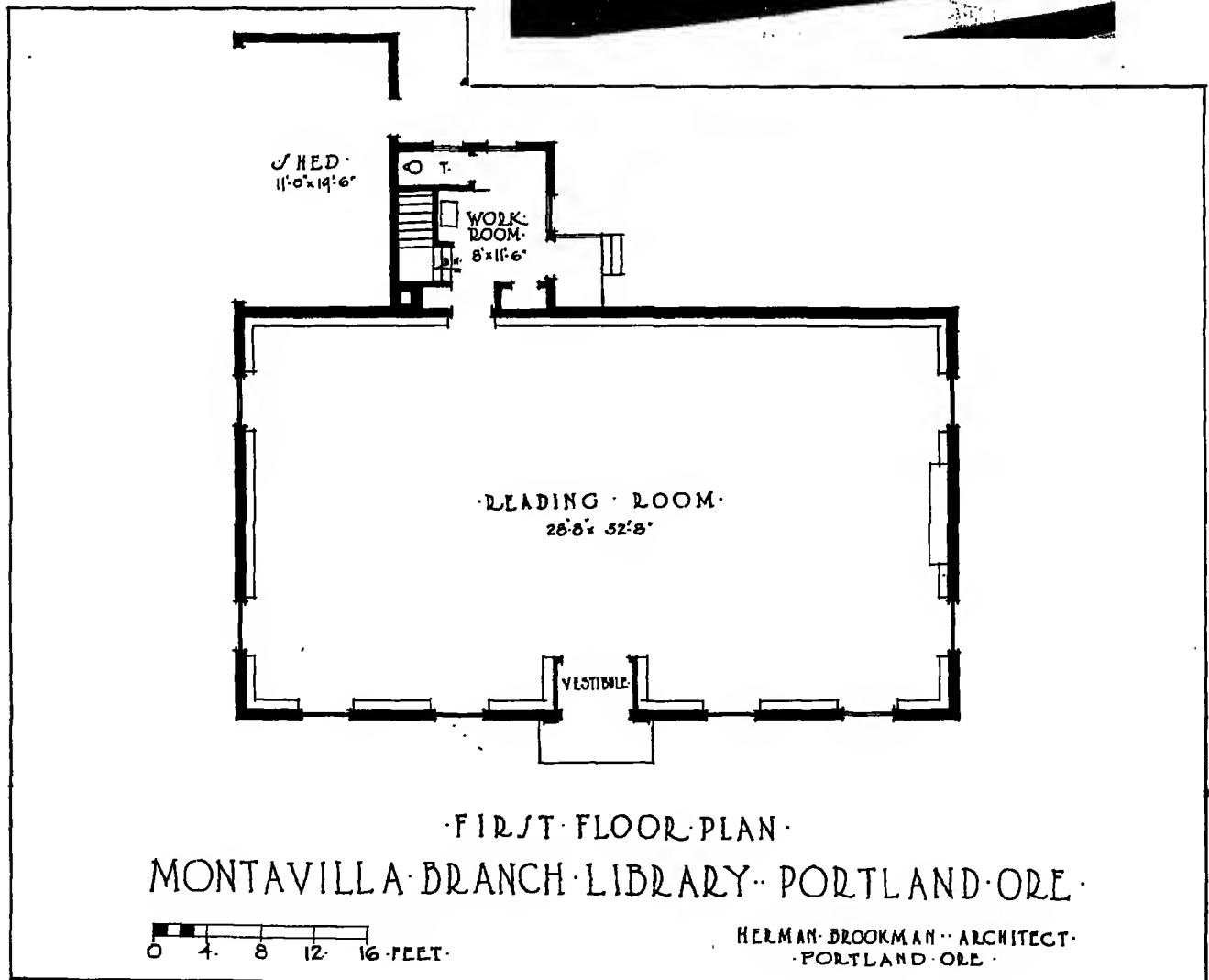
Note the pleasing effect added because of color in the tile roof and the green of the neatly cropped hedge against white stucco walls.



Montavilla Branch,

Portland, Oregon

This charming building was constructed at the low cost of twenty-two cents per cubic foot. The Library Board secured from the City a lot which it owned, provided plans by a local architect, and supplied money for material. The S.E.R.A. provided labor and superintendence. The building stands on a lot 100' x 100' and consists of one large room 30' x 50' and a small work room. Charming design, good proportion, abundant light and an inviting atmosphere make this simple structure distinguished. The rear wall provides ample shelving unbroken by windows. The exterior is light brown with bright blue shutters. The interior is a soft gray with window sashes of coral color. The tables and chairs are oak stained gray to harmonize with the walls. The Park Bureau of the City provided the shrubs for the planting.

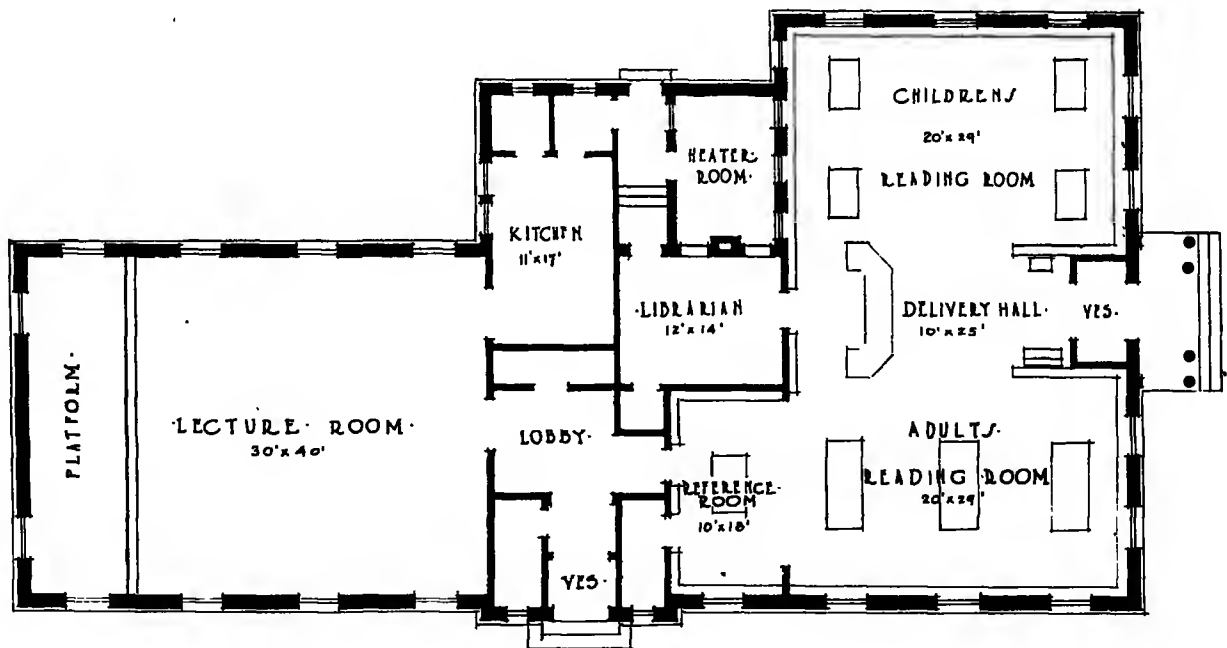


Brooks County Library, Quitman, Georgia

On an appropriation of approximately two thousand dollars the Library serves the City's population of 5,000 and the County's 21,330. A librarian distributes books to all schools and many homes. Centrally located, the assembly hall with direct entrance is used as a meeting place for many organizations such as U.D.C., D.A.R., and Woman's Club. As the work of the library grows the assembly hall may be used for the Children's Department. Such unrestricted and undivided space is a great asset in prolonging the life of a building, as it is readily remodeled to meet new conditions. Excellent planting adds immeasurably to the attractiveness of the building.



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FIRST FLOOR PLAN

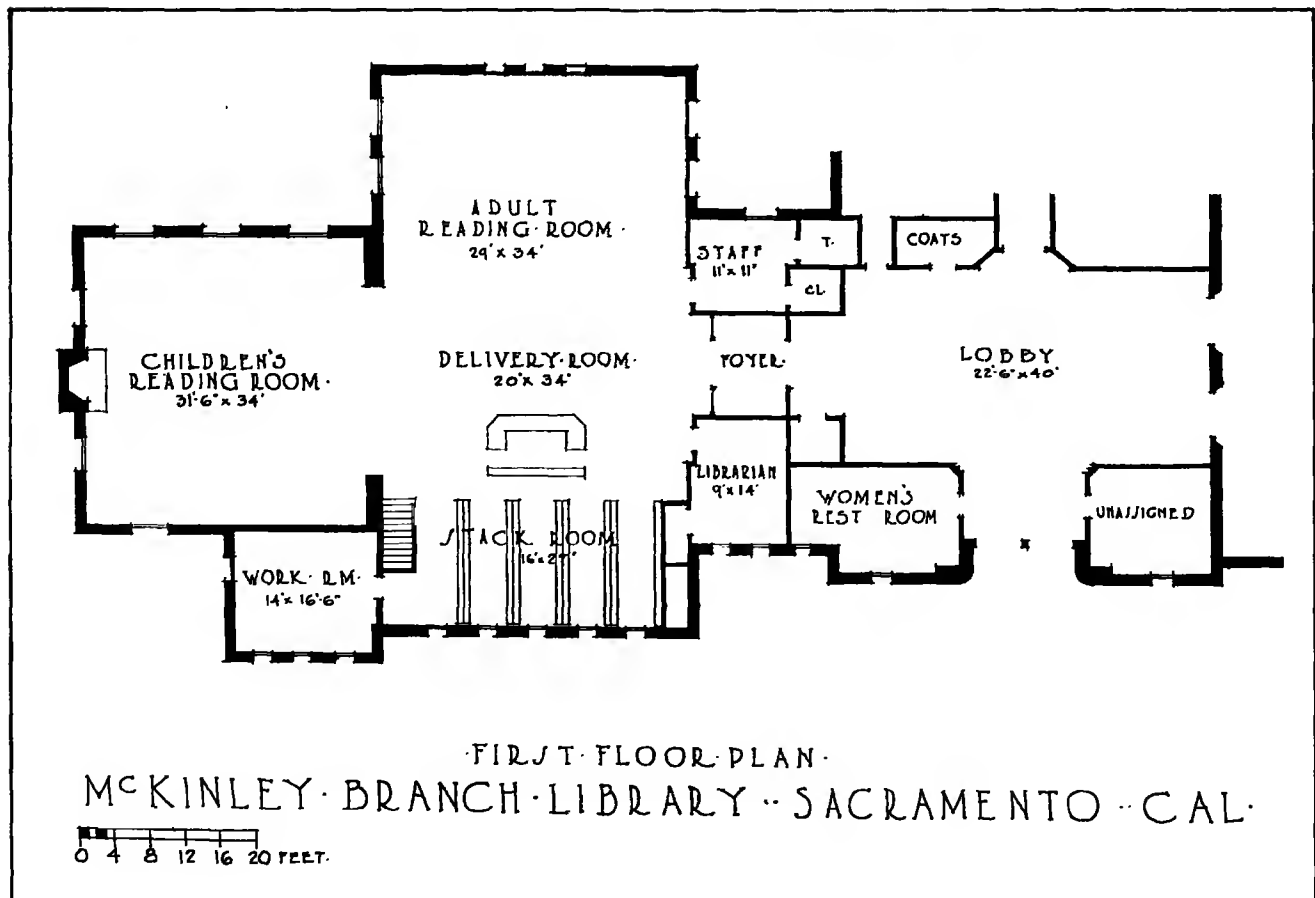
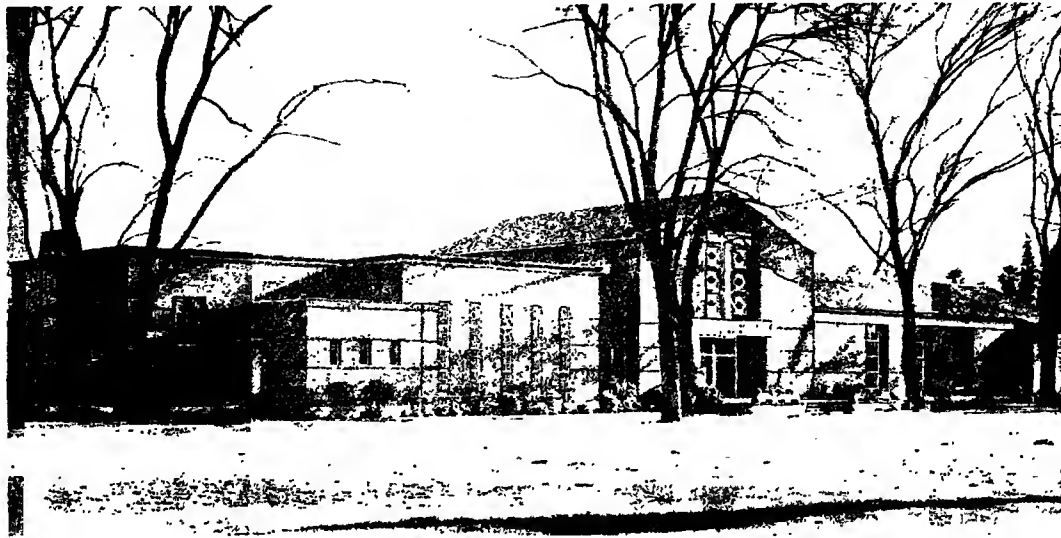
BROOKS COUNTY LIBRARY
QUITMAN GEORGIA

0 4 8 12 16 FEET

LLOYD GREER
ARCHITECT

McKinley Branch, Sacramento, Cal.

A branch of the City Free Library as an annex of the Clunie Memorial Club House. The one front entrance to the building is used jointly by the library and the recreation division of the club. The library may be opened when the club house is closed. The building was erected at a cost of \$150,000 plus \$16,000 for the library annex.



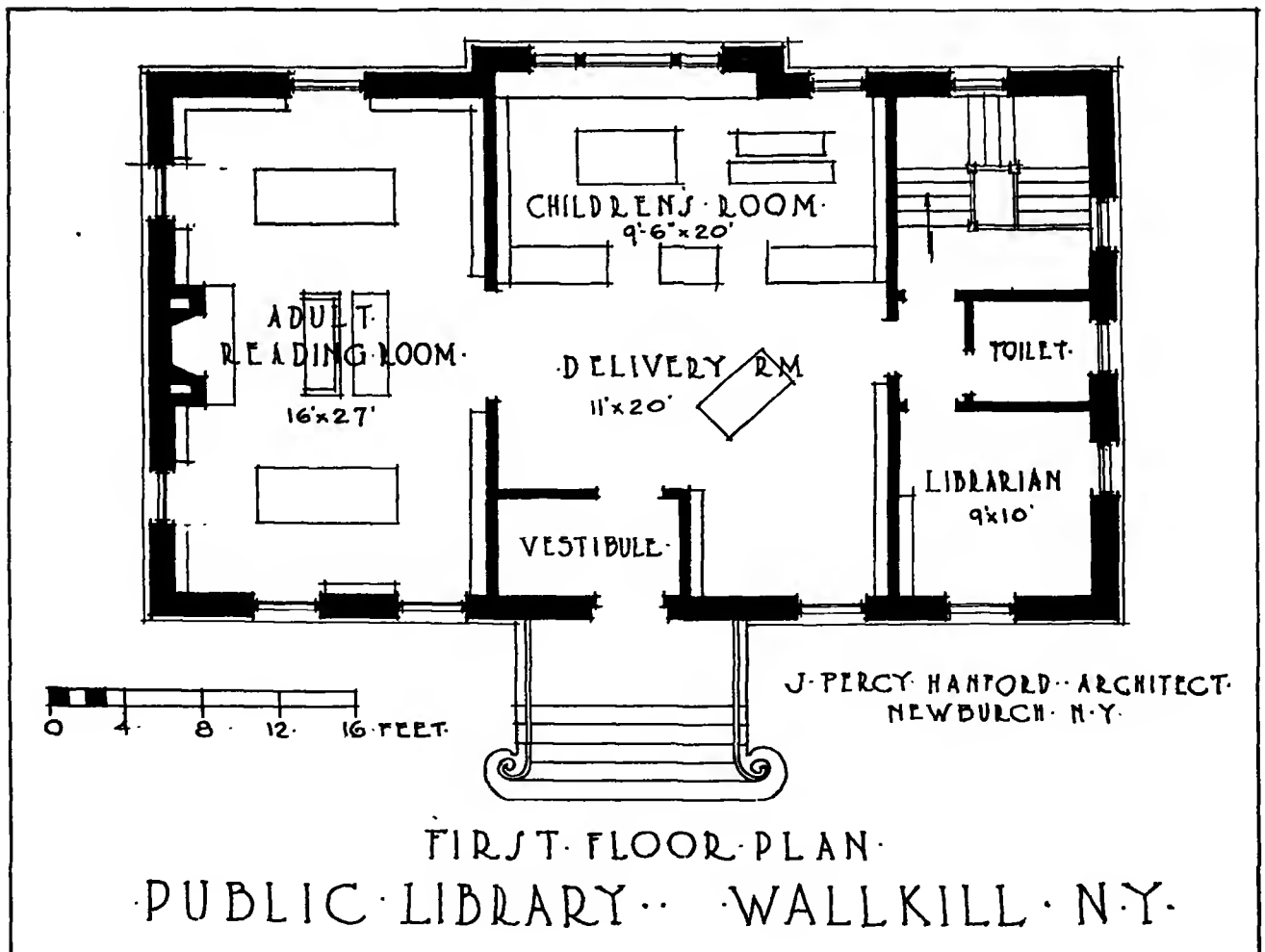
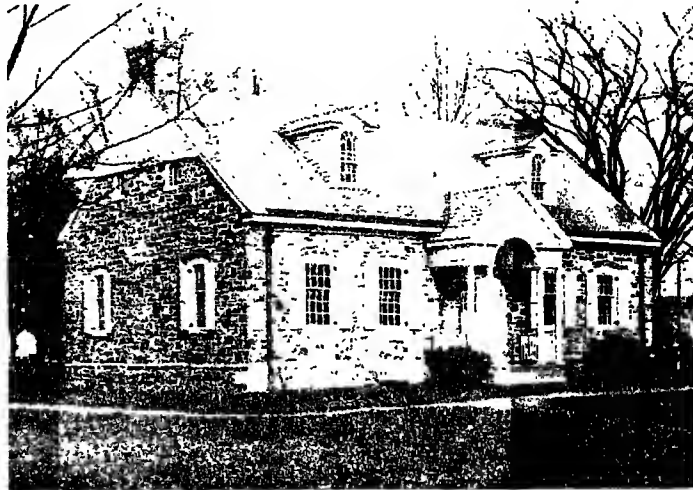
Bond Hill Branch, Cincinnati, Ohio

This building is constructed of old brick painted, the roof covering is of an asphalt-asbestos composition shingle, and the floor is of Tiletex in red and black squares. The exposed beams in the reading room are of Oregon fir, rubbed with silvery gray. The furniture and shelving are of oak. The window frames are metal. An adjustable ventilator opens into the cupola. Two display windows at the entrance are an attractive feature. The building is heated by a coal furnace, with an automatic stoker. The entire basement under the reading room is cemented and the walls covered with shelving for storage. Maximum shelving capacity has been obtained by placing the windows high in the wall. This building cost thirty cents per cubic foot. Distinction has been added to attractiveness by painting the sign of the library on the wall. Carefully planned planting will enhance the exterior more and more as the shrubbery grows.



Public Library, Wallkill, New York

This beautiful design laid in native stone is amply justified in preserving a local tradition. It calls for an entrance at nearly grade level. It is "a down in the grass" type. The friendliness of its attractive exterior is carried out in an almost homelike atmosphere within. The area of the basement is devoted to heating apparatus and that of the generous attic to storage. All public activities are confined to the main floor. The shelving capacity and the provision for readers are small in comparison with buildings of a similar size shown elsewhere. If a small club room or a local historical museum were ever required it might be possible to arrange this in the attic as was done in the Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire Public Library.

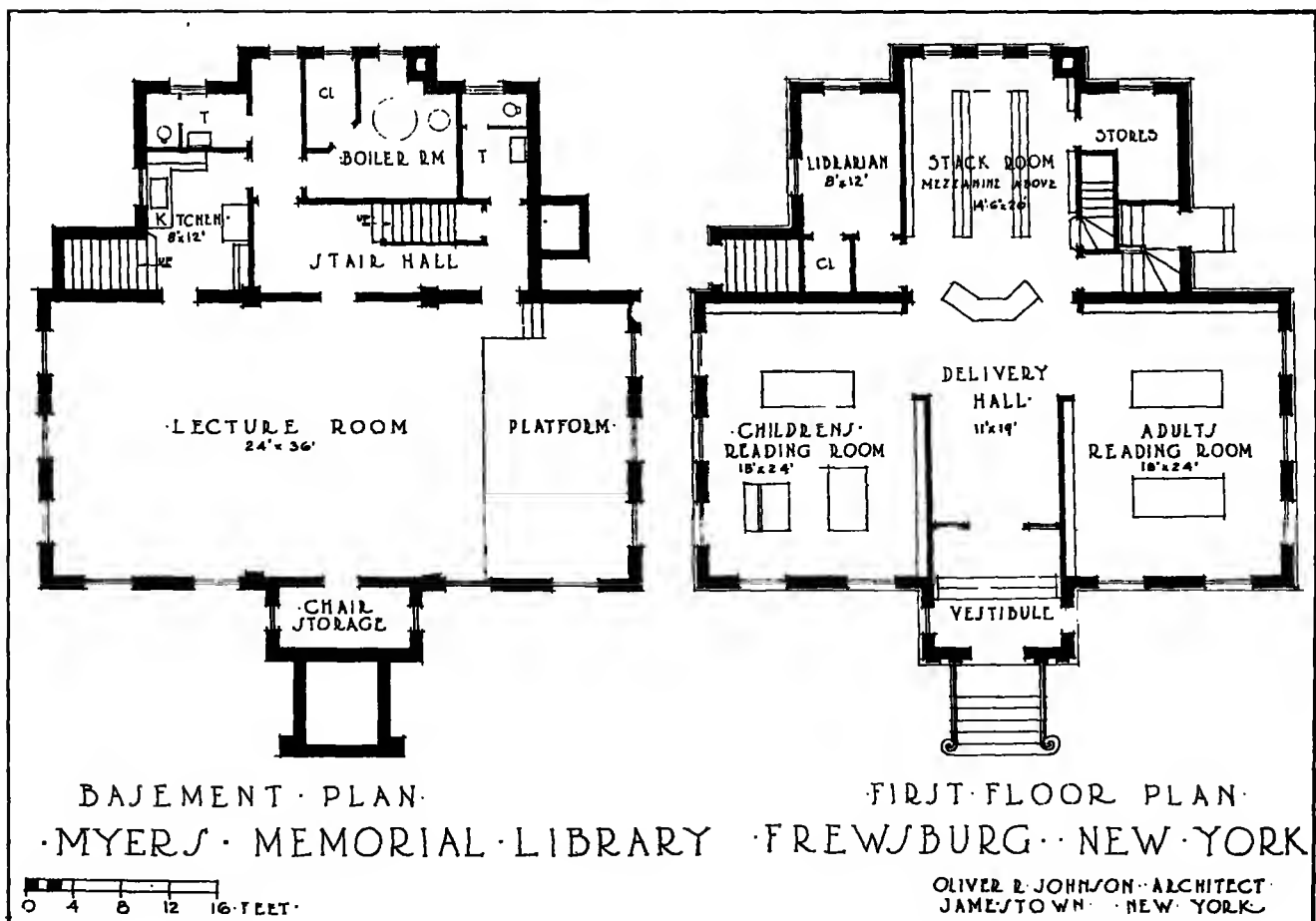


Myers Memorial Library, Frewsburg, New York

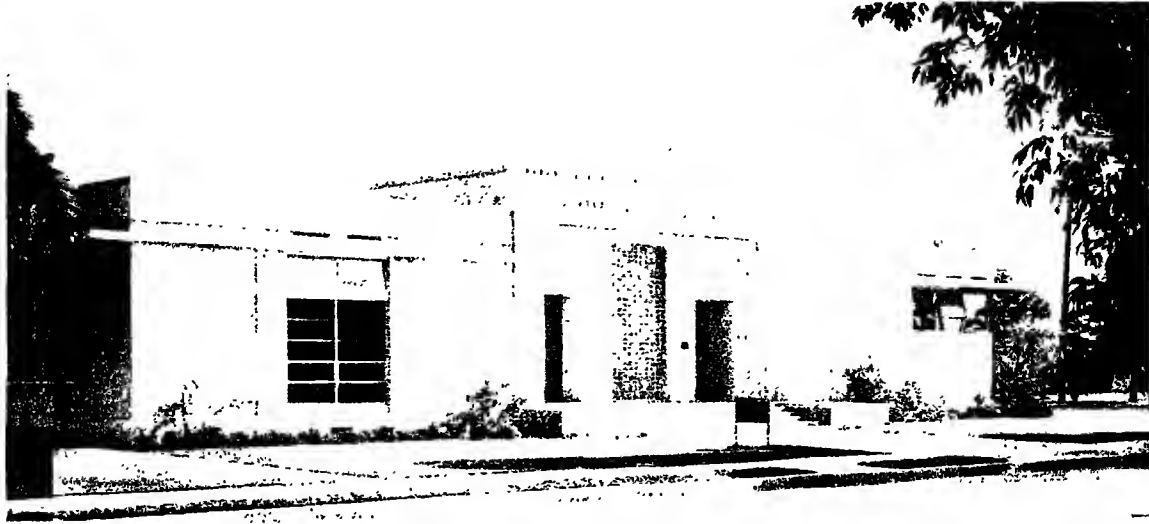
This compact plan provides shelving in a small two story stack on the main floor in addition to wall shelving in the reading rooms. The librarian's room, with a closet and wash basin, is sufficiently near the desk to aid



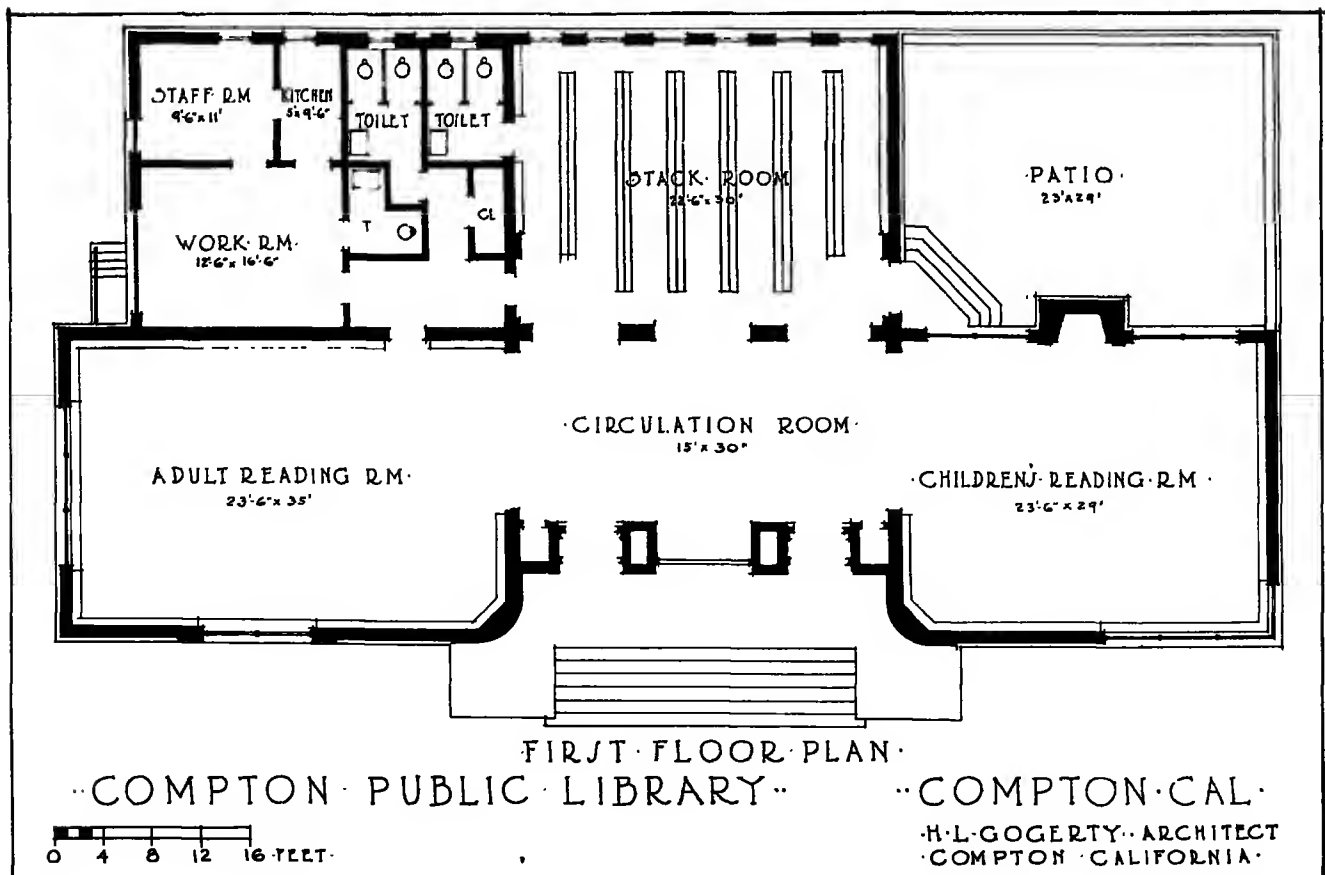
in the control of the stack. This plan requires the public to walk up six steps outside the building and three steps in the vestibule before reaching the main floor. By so doing, however, it has been possible to provide in a light, airy basement a lecture hall with a direct outside entrance and another through the library above. This room is used for story-hours. Girl scouts, sewing classes and other groups hold meetings here. A well equipped kitchen is a desirable asset. The stairway to lavatories are under the control of the desk. Although this type of design is efficient it leaves much to be desired in charm. Its appearance is stiff and hard. Satisfactory foundation planting would be difficult.



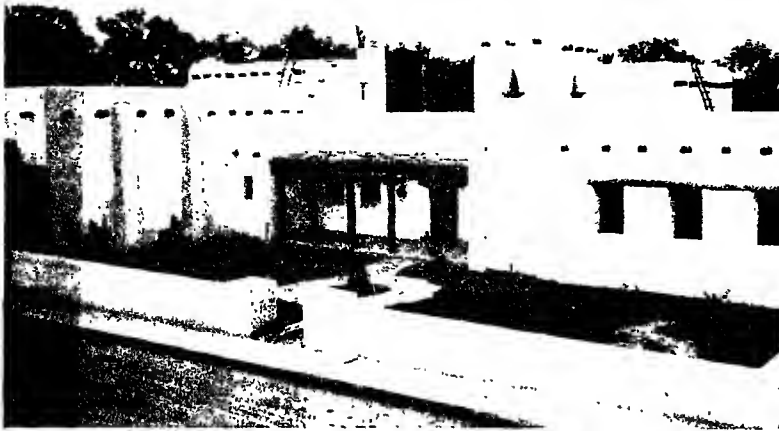
Public Library, Compton, California



A modernistic design indicates the interesting possibilities of window lighting. Two doorways provide for separate entrance and exit. The glass brick panel between the doors furnishes ample light for the return and charging desks immediately adjacent to the entrance and exit. Both this library and that at Torrance are branches of the Los Angeles County Public Library. The floor plans are similar but that of Torrance includes a lecture hall in place of the patio. Experience indicates that a patio, pleasant in theory, is seldom practical or comfortable as a reading room.

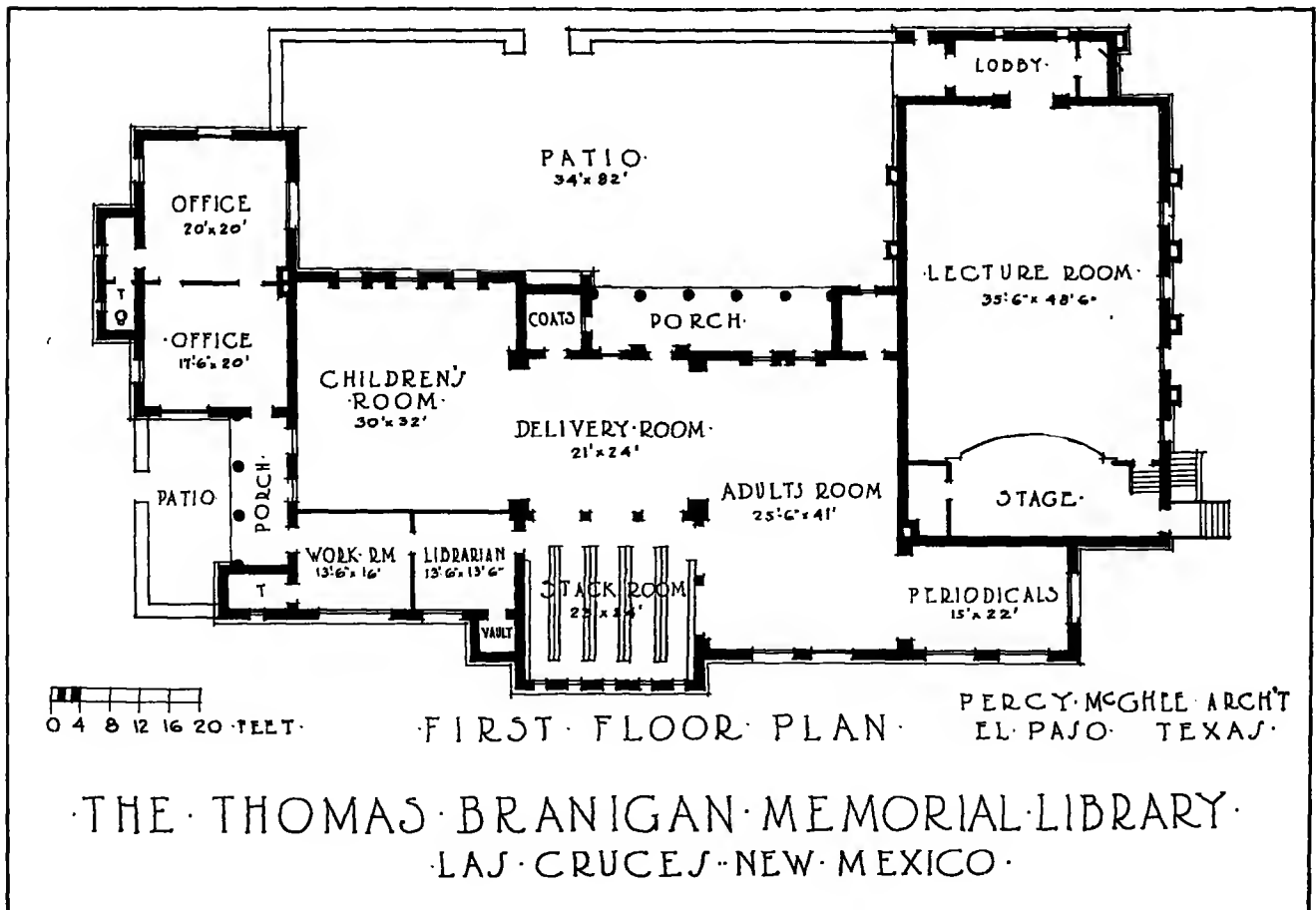


Thomas Branigan Memorial Library, Las Cruces, New Mexico



This fine example of early New Mexico design of Pueblo architecture is constructed in hollow tile, with an exterior in rough trowel stucco. The main entrance, enclosed in a low wall, forming a patio, is through red tile portals which are overlaid with vigas or beams of native wood. The librarian has complete supervision from a centrally located desk. Ceilings of nu-wood tile blend in tone with wooden vigas throughout the interior, furniture in brown harmonizes with this finish. Semi-indirect electric fixtures and

Venetian blinds provide well diffused lighting. Two office rooms are rented temporarily to the mayor, the town manager and clerk, but may be incorporated into library quarters when the need arises. A large lecture hall forms a part of the building, but has no entrance to or from the library.

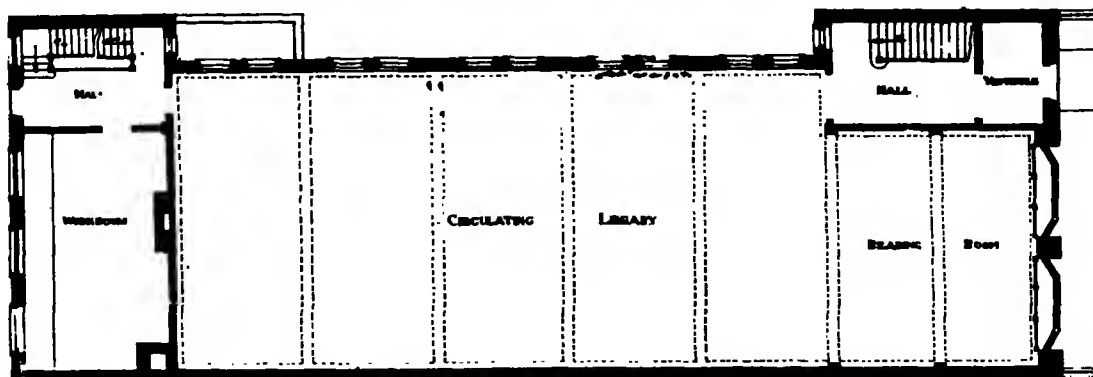


Danforth Branch, Toronto, Canada

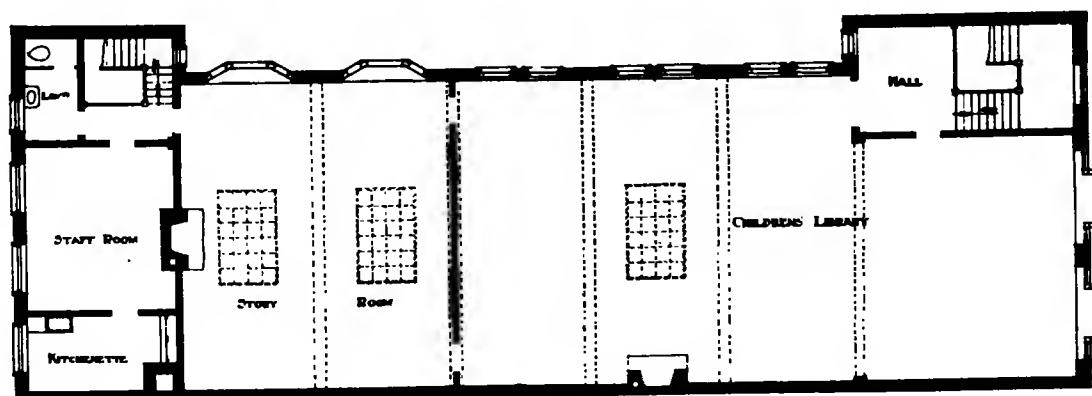
Located at a popular street-car intersection in a busy shopping center, surrounded by store buildings, it has an appropriate atmosphere and attractiveness both in the exterior and interior. The front of the building



is in the style of an old English shop-front; bay windows, small glass panes, an overhang to the upper story, a beamed ceiling, a heavy paneled door, a shingled and gabled roof. For adequate floor space the building covers the entire site, forty feet wide and one hundred and ten feet deep. A light well or area, with maximum window space on the south side, permits unbroken shelving on the north and east walls of the main circulation rooms. The children are amply provided for on the second floor, reached by a stair in the front entrance vestibule. The location, size and lighting of the staff room and work room indicate careful planning of space.



First Floor Plan

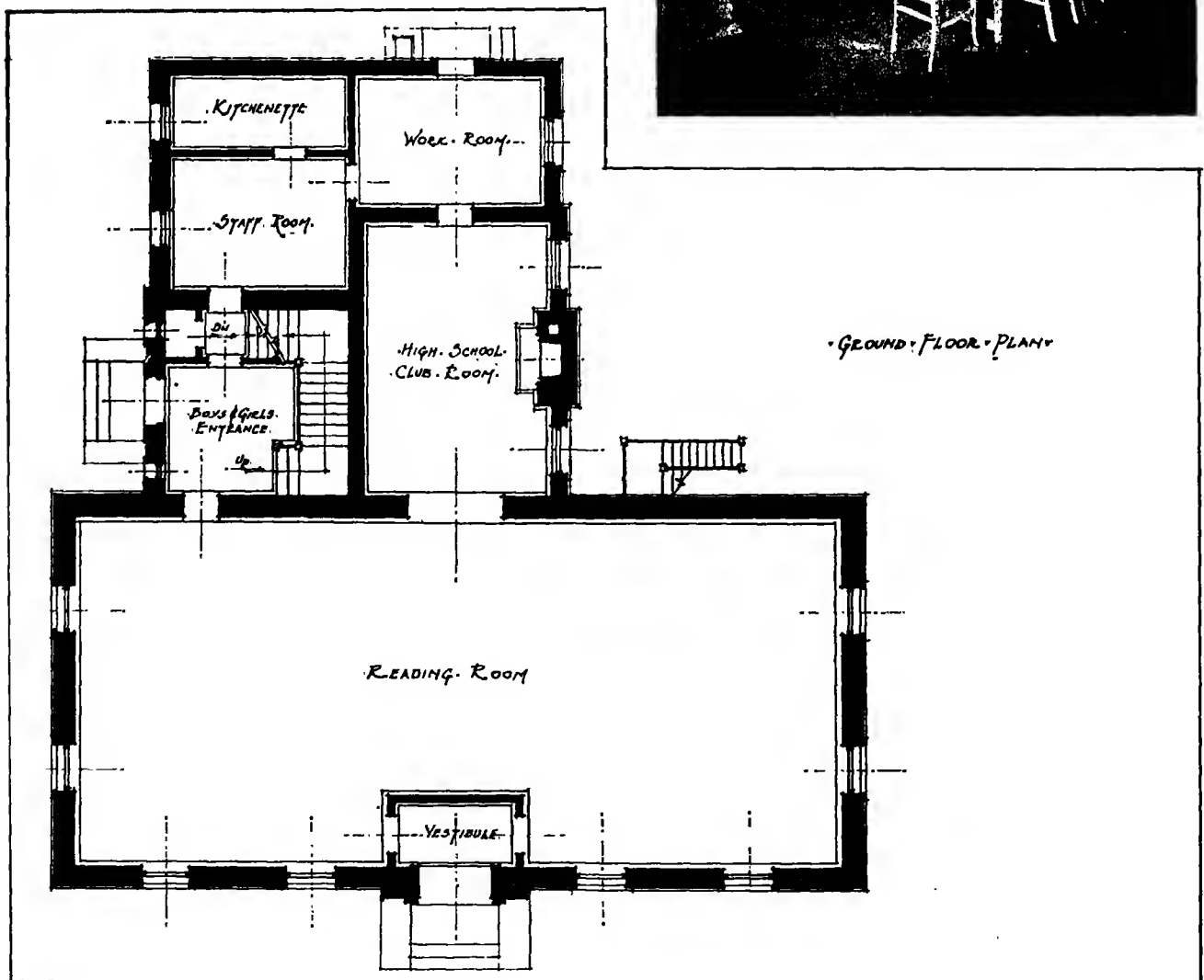


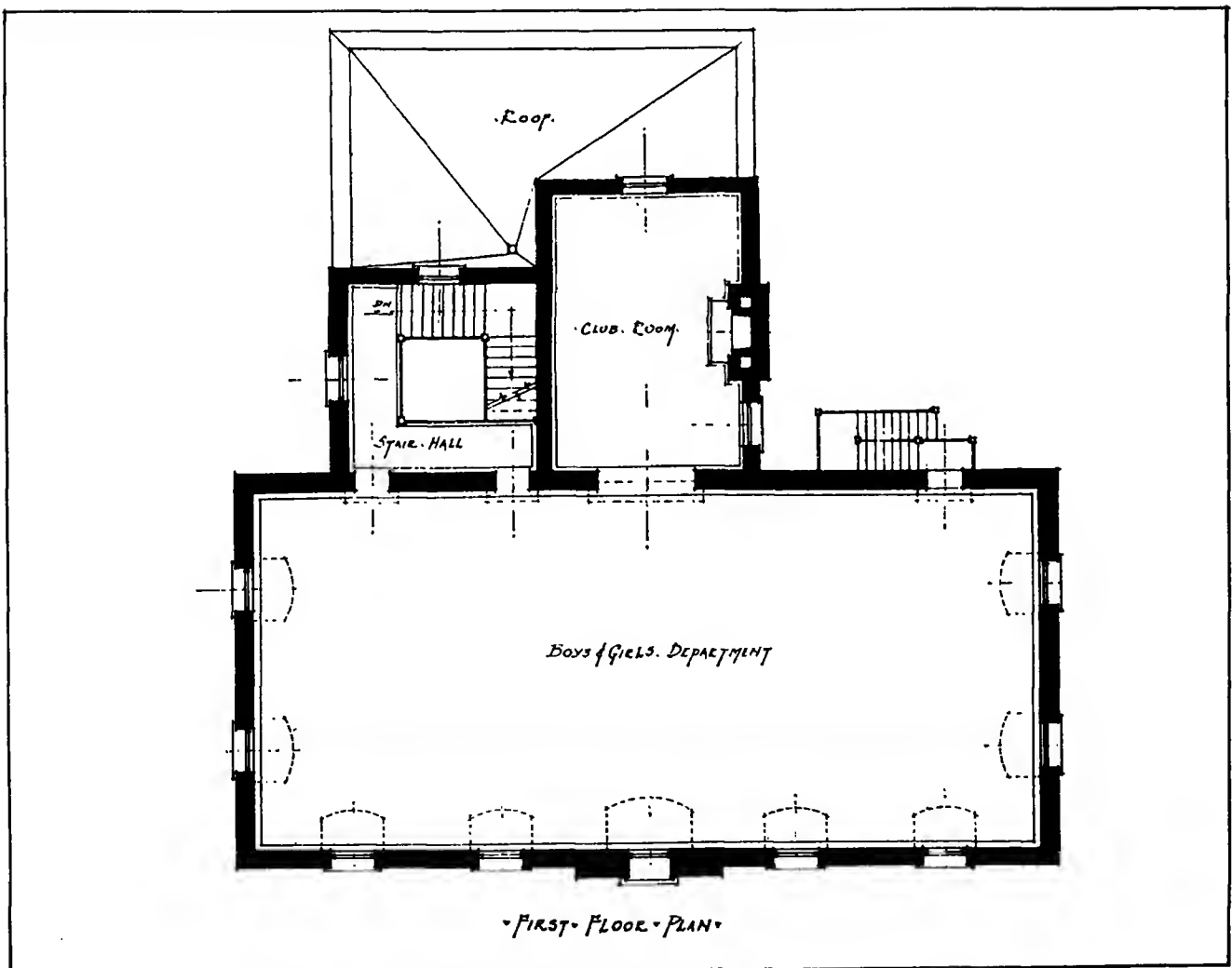
Second Floor Plan

Runnymede Branch, Toronto, Canada

The architect took advantage of the corner site to produce two equally attractive façades, one for the adult entrance, and one for the boys and girls. Large low windows give passersby a view of the inviting interior, an idea which is itself a new and successful method of enabling a library to make its initial appeal. There is, throughout, a radical departure from the customary "institution" type of library building and there is deliberate creation of "atmosphere." The library is on a main thoroughfare but in a residential area, and the domestic note which is struck makes the library harmonize with its surroundings. The design shows a distinctive Canadian note in treatment. There is the high pitched roof of French Canada with the ordinary small black slate similar to that used in France, and all the ornamentation is significant of Canadian bird and animal life.

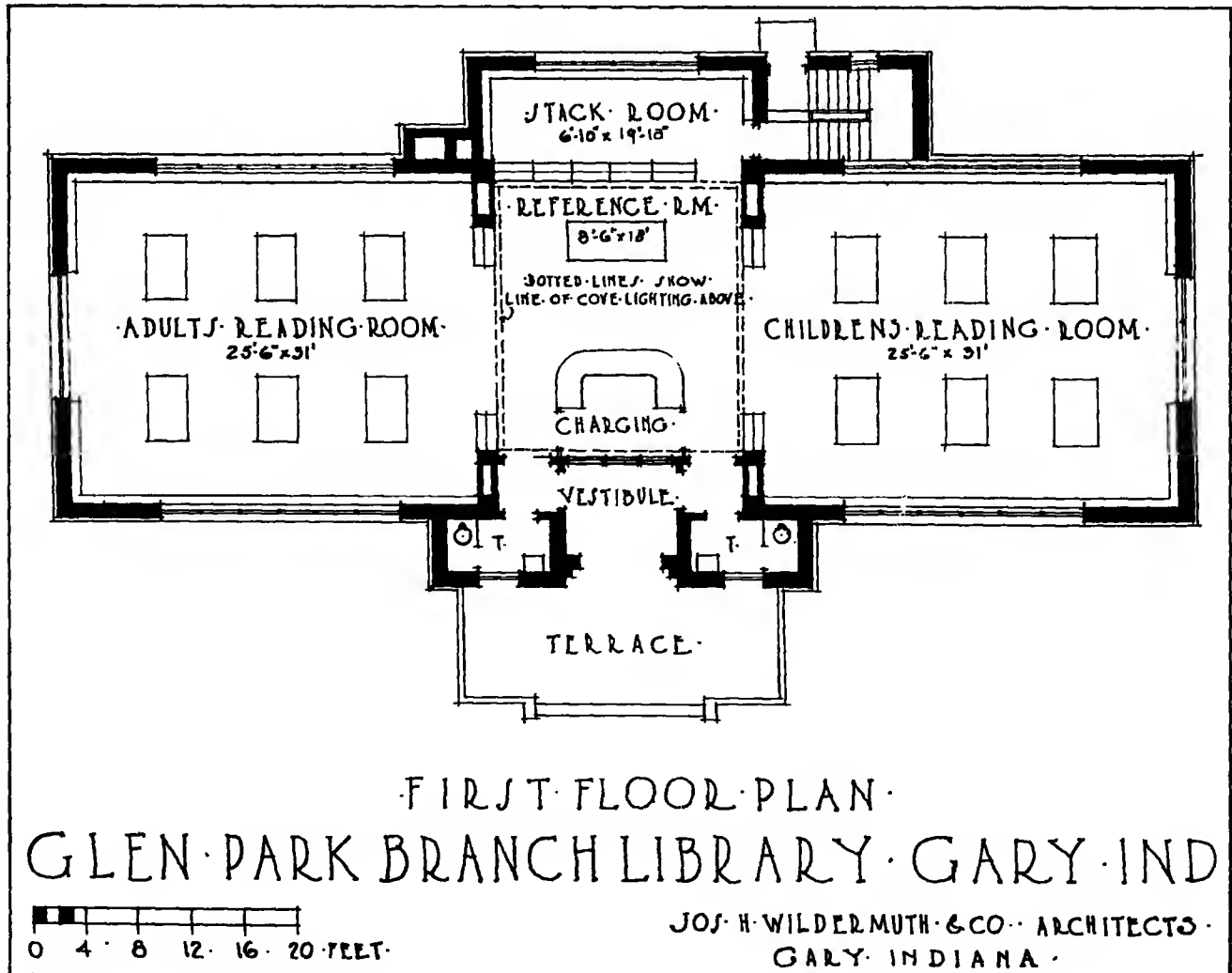
Large solid wooden shutters frame the important windows on the ground floor, giving a domestic note. For the exterior color scheme, primitive Indian colors such as yellow, ochre, cobalt blue, etc., have been used, giving a distinctive and effective color note against the grey stone.





Glen Park Branch, Public Library, Gary, Indiana

A modern design houses the conventional layout of circulation area flanked by rooms for children and adults. But the building has extreme interest because of the treatment of natural and artificial lighting. Large, concentrated areas are given to windows, placed high in the walls. This arrangement permits a maximum of wall shelving. Cove lighting provides ample, well diffused illumination without shadows in every part of each room. The ceiling is painted a warm cream and the walls are light green. The architect designed a most effective planting scheme for a setting of the building. A privet hedge shuts in the front lawns, but in the rear a well designed wire fence secures privacy and protection. Building Committees should face the fact that in some neighborhoods a strong wire, non-climbable, completely enclosing fence is the only solution for the care of the property and for many of the discipline problems outside the building. It is an inexpensive insurance.

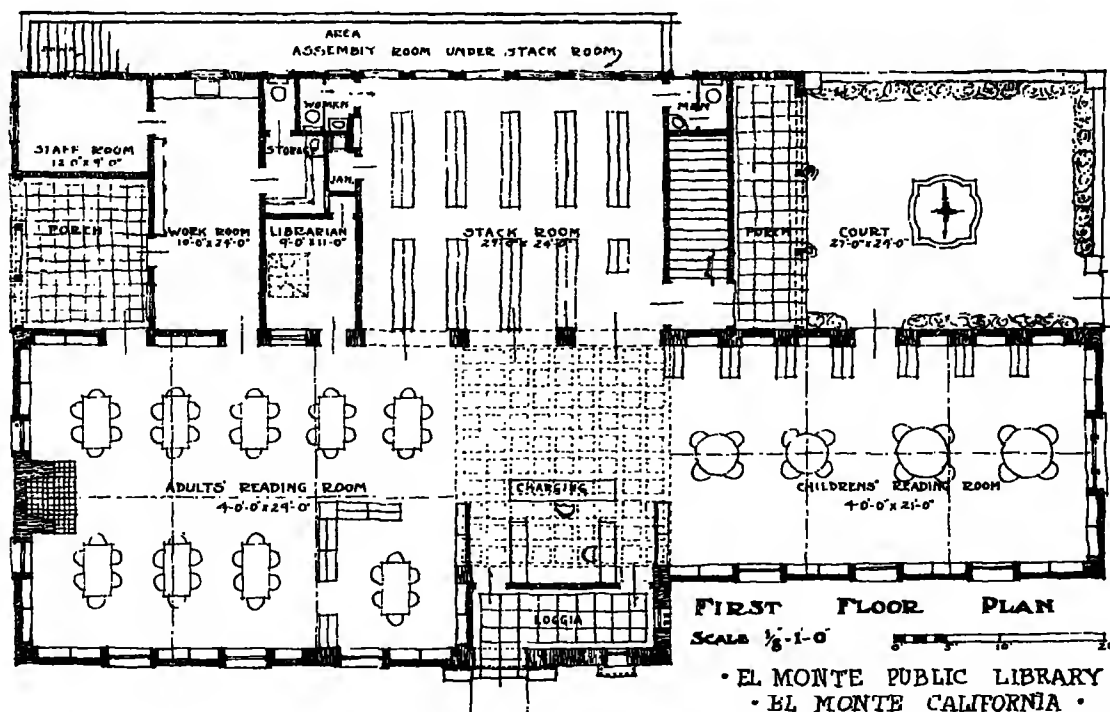


Public Library, El Monte, California

This is a charming design in which an interesting use of court areas and porches has been made. The circulation desk is built as a part of the entrance arrangements, giving maximum control of all incoming and outgoing traffic. One enters the building through a vestibule, goes through a door immediately past the desk and goes his way through the rest of the building. This arrangement has obvious advantages over the desk placed opposite the door but across the room from it. The librarian's office, work room and staff quarters have been well segregated from the public, but are of convenient access. The fact that there are exits from the reading rooms to the porch and court, and especially from the stack room directly to the

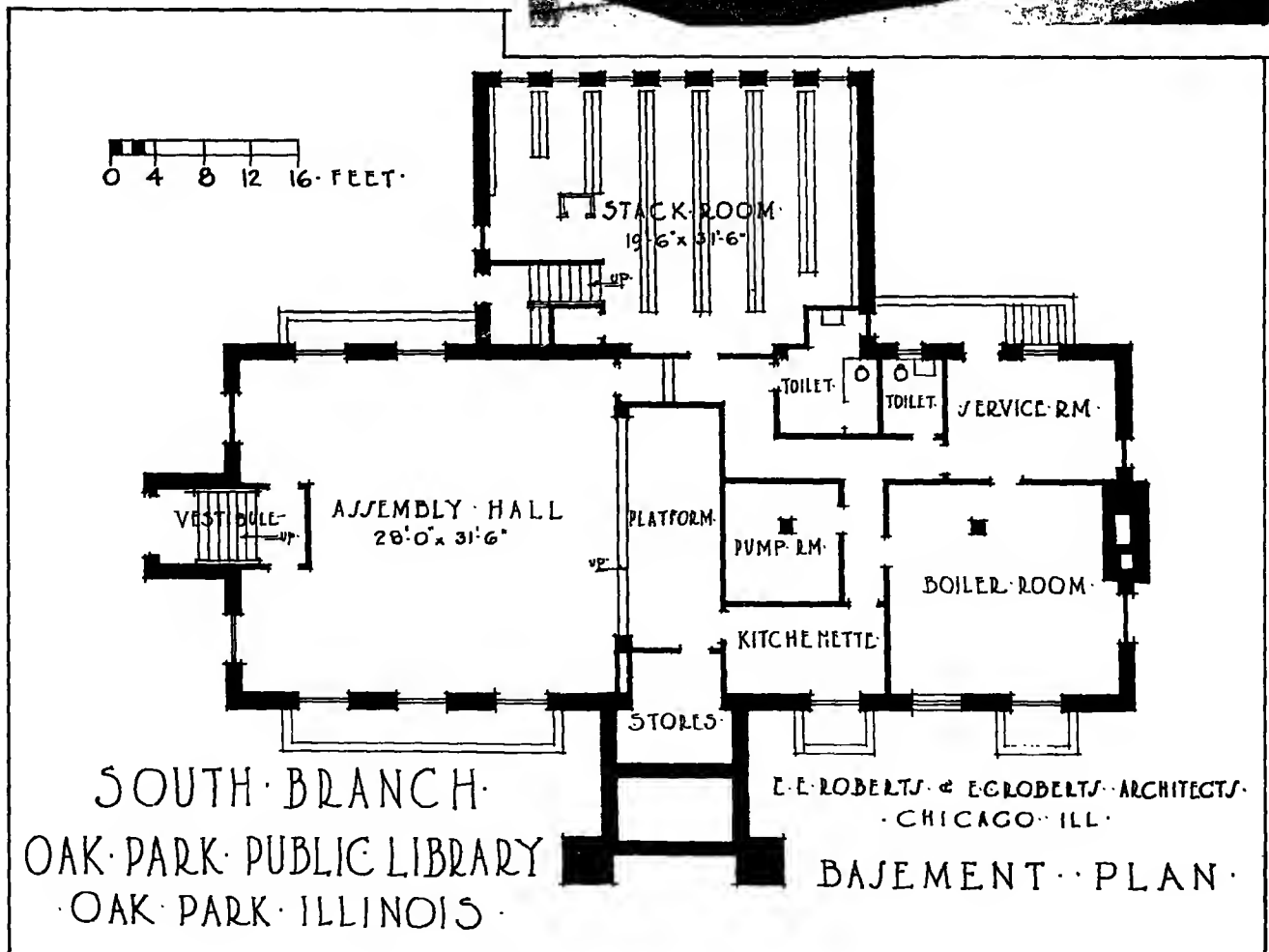


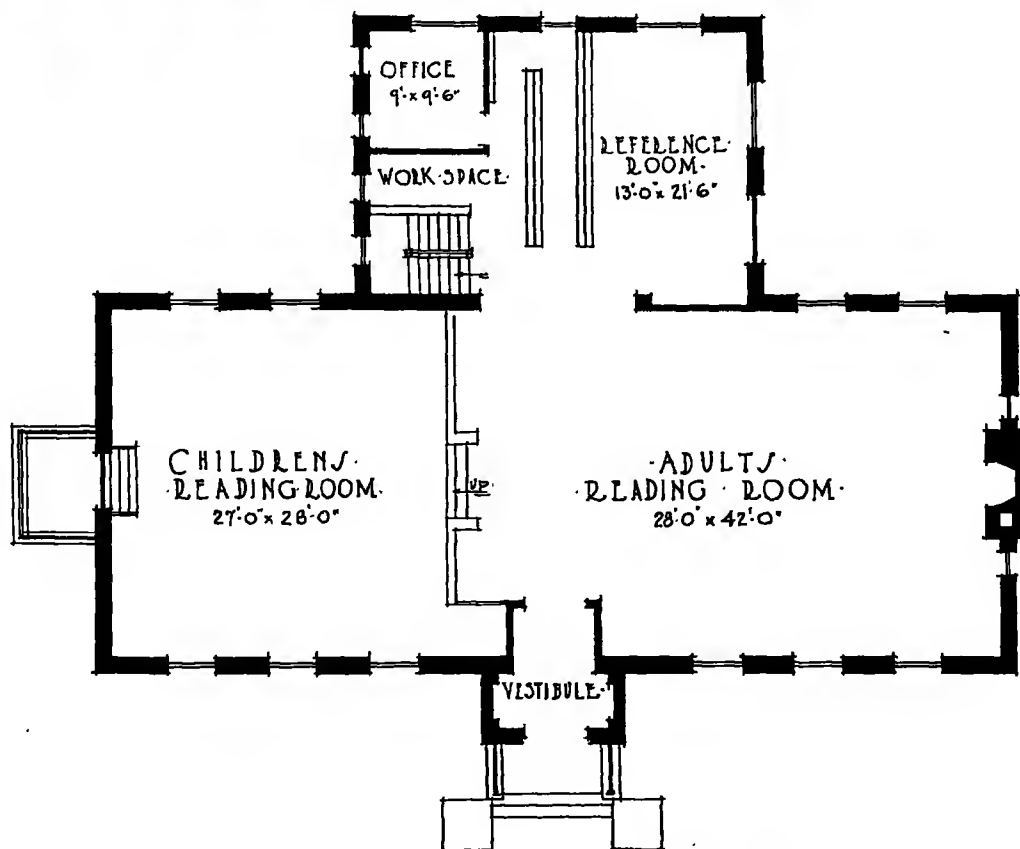
court, would indicate that the court must be supervised or closed as a general exit. Every exit increases the need of supervision and raises the danger of loss of books. A single entrance and exit serves many buildings many times larger than this one.



South Branch, Oak Park, Illinois

Sound in design and construction; acoustical tile in ceiling for quiet, overhead direct lighting and Venetian blinds for comfortable reading, excellent facilities for supervision across low shelves, making functional divisions, low windows, inviting interior. Addition at rear opposite entrance provides reference room and librarian's office. Skillful planning has provided a light, well ventilated lecture hall in the basement without requiring readers to climb a high flight of steps to the main entrance. Height in this room was gained by raising the floor of the children's room above that of the adult room. A direct separate entrance at grade level admits to the lecture hall with convenience and dignity. However, the vestibule juts into the assembly hall and reduces good seating area by the space it takes up as well as by the awkward corners it creates. A steel stack provides basement storage beneath the reference room.

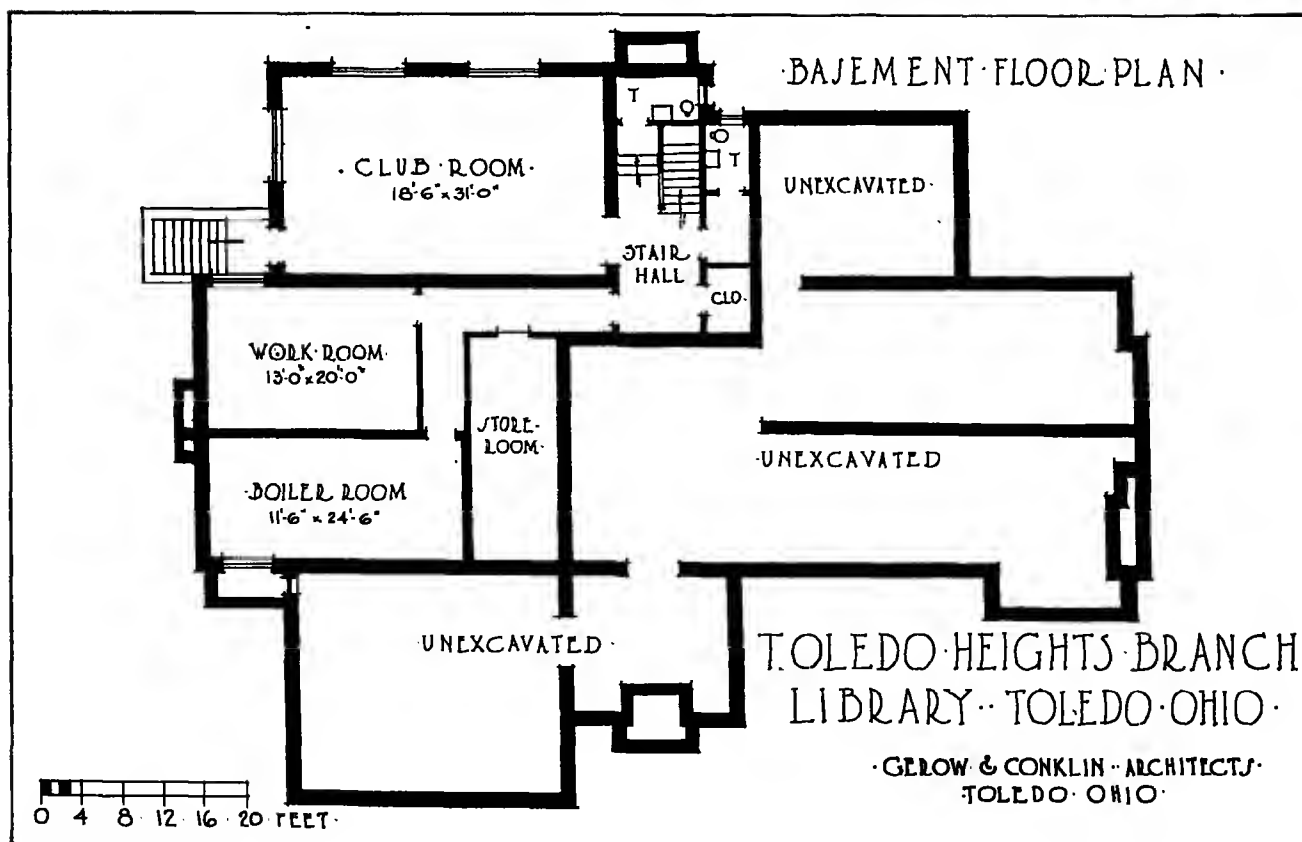




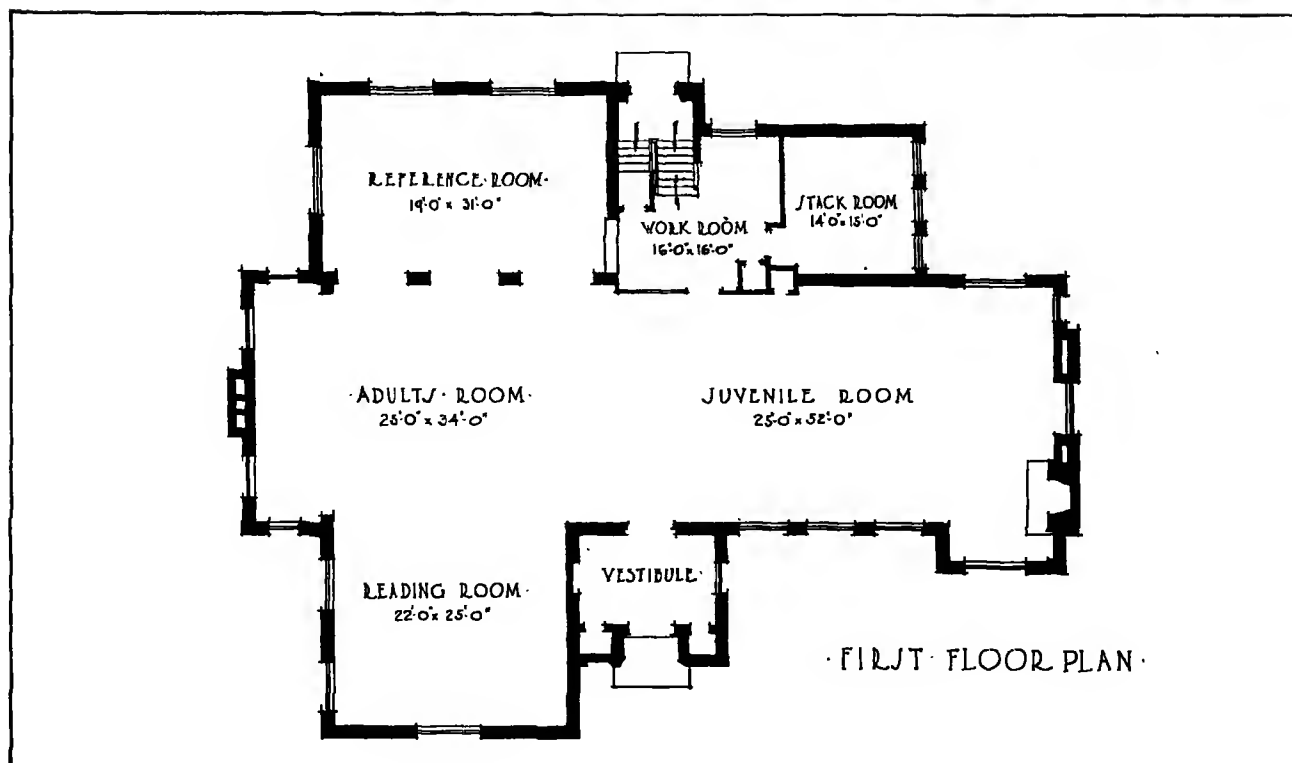
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Toledo Heights Branch, Toledo, Ohio

This building is roughly T-shaped. The entrance in the angle of the upright and the crossbar admits readers to the center of the building. The charging desk, straight ahead of the entrance, completely controls all parts of the building. Immediately behind it is the librarian's office. The space at the left of the entrance is divided into three alcoves. That nearest the front of the building is lighted by a huge window and has display space backed by a window seat, on each end of which are small book racks with bulletin boards. The opposite end is the reference alcove, marked off by three shallow arches and two piers to separate it from the rest of the room. It is under supervision from the librarian's desk located in lower left corner of work room. The center alcove has special book display racks, some floor lamps and comfortable chairs,



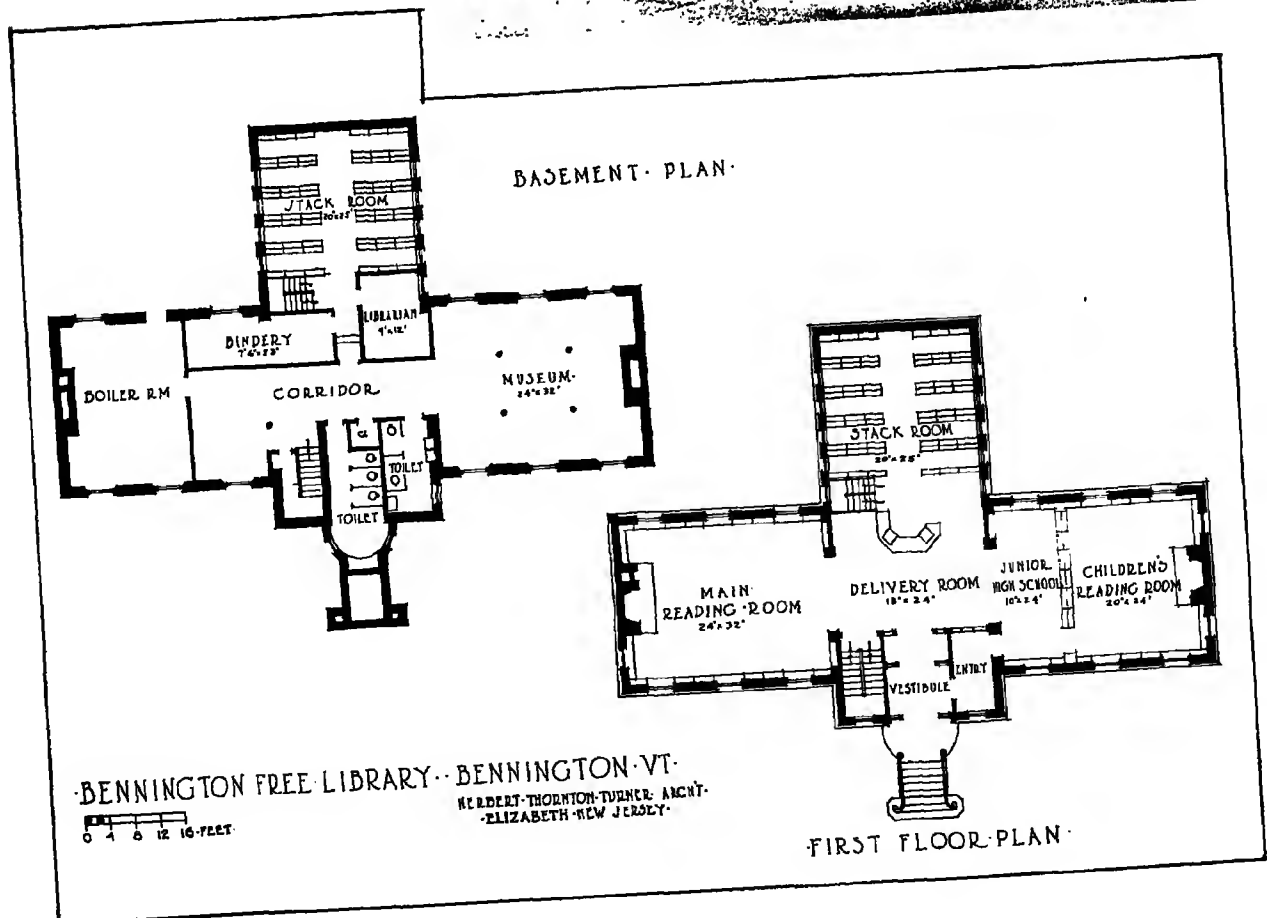
alluring to casual readers. Cement blocks without a smooth plaster finish was distinct economy and is not unattractive. Staff rooms are placed over the reference alcove, reached by a stair through the librarian's office. In the basement are the usual furnace and work rooms, public toilets and a small club room. No auditorium was planned for the branch because there is one in the vicinity. The site of the branch is a lot at the edge of a park, deeded to the library board by the City, and only a short block from a main highway. Shrubbery in foreground is not on the library property. This charming design with a domestic feeling is admirably suited for such a public building as a library planned for the convenience and comfort of its readers.



Free Library, Bennington, Vermont

In a New England town noted for its beautiful Georgian meeting houses and dwellings, it is appropriate that the public library should be designed in the same manner. An arched doorway, reached by a graceful flight of curved steps, a Palladian window in the gable above, a wide expanse of slate covered sloping roof, surmounted by a steeple with a graceful lantern and copper dome, give hints of the refined interior. Carefully designed woodwork makes an excellent background for warm colored maple furniture. A dome of blue glass representing the sky, stars and planets over the main circulation room suggests a bygone day. Complete air conditioning, on the other hand, suggests up to date-ness.

Adults enter by the main door; children by the side door. The junior high room is shut off from the children's department by a glass partition and door. The latter is already outgrowing the space provided. Ample shelving in the reading rooms is greatly augmented by a three tier steel stack.

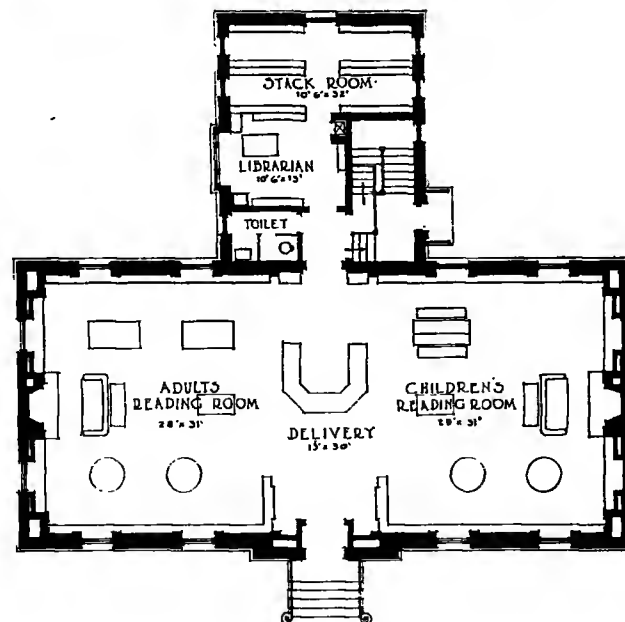


Rathbun Memorial Library, East Haddam, Connecticut

This library building includes community house facilities. It consists of a main building containing the reading room and a rear wing containing a stack room and stair to the basement and a social room to which a side entrance leads direct.



The charging desk immediately in front of the main front entrance commands the entire room, 60 feet long and 30 feet wide. At each end of the room is a fireplace with paneled overmantels and portraits. Three thousand books are on shelves around the room. The book stack provides shelving for about 4,500 more books on the main floor with a work space for the librarian, and above, connected with a book lift, shelving for about 4,000 volumes. The exterior is in harmony with the surroundings of the building and is designed in the best tradition of the locality. The walls are of soft red waterstruck brick, the sills marble. The cornice is wood and the roof slate. The front doorway is characteristic of colonial Connecticut. The delicate cupola is a ventilator for both the reading and social rooms.



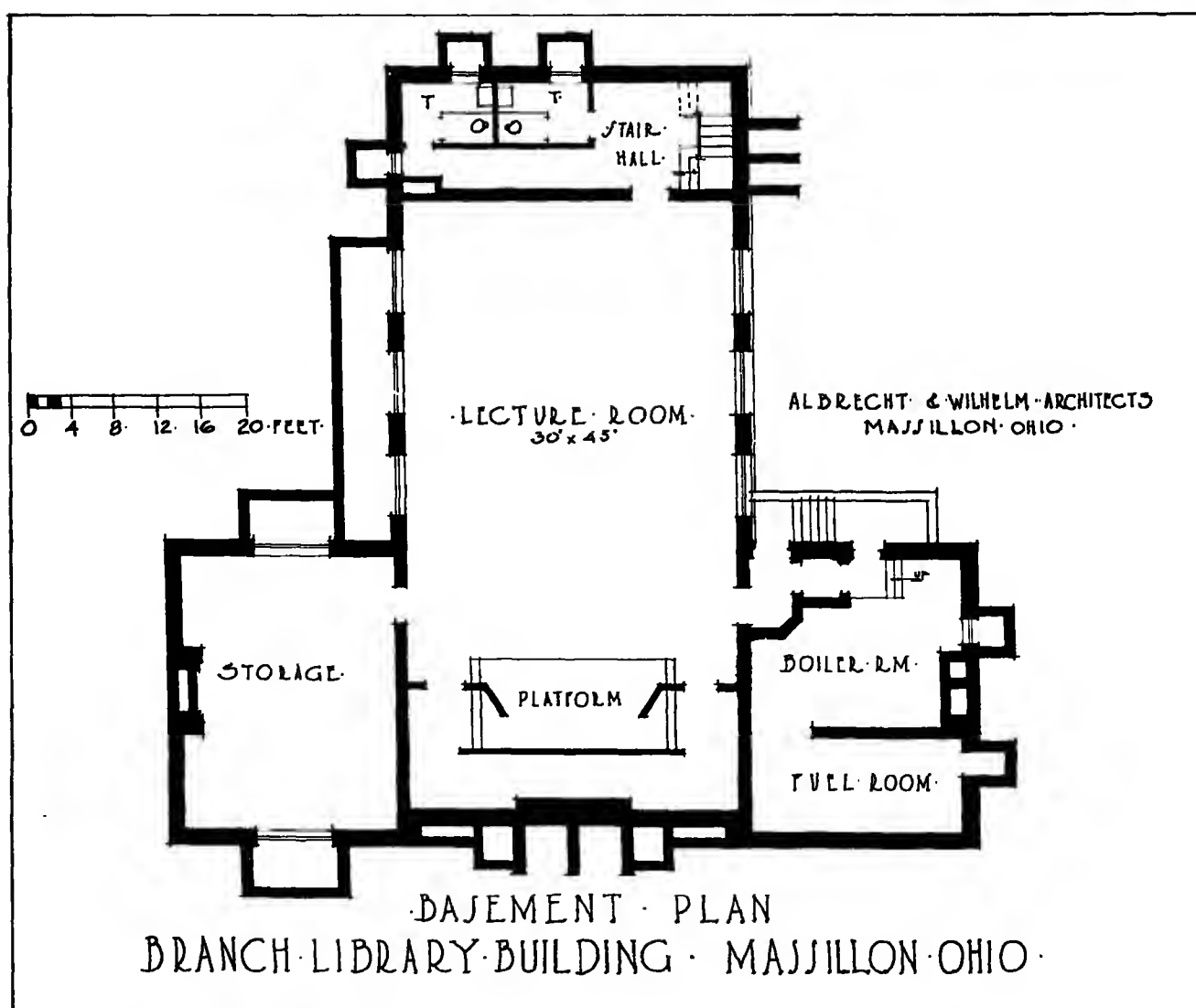
MAIN FLOOR PLAN
RATHBUN FREE MEMORIAL LIBRARY EAST HADDAM CT.

0 4 8 12 16 FEET

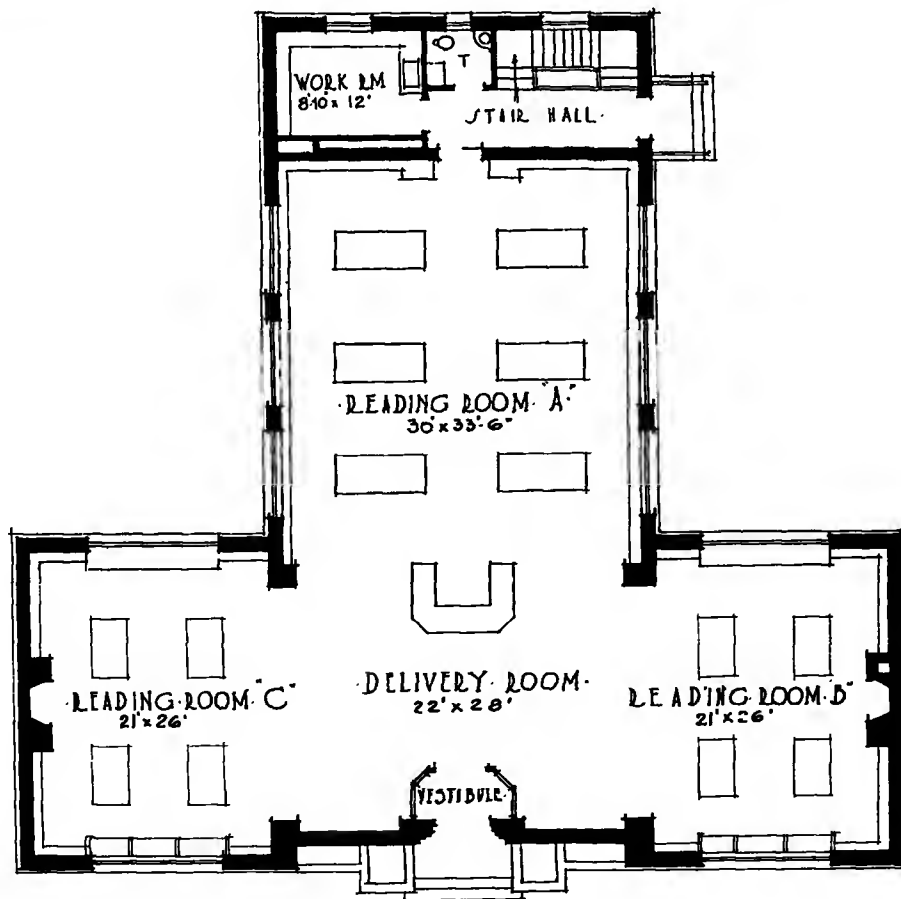
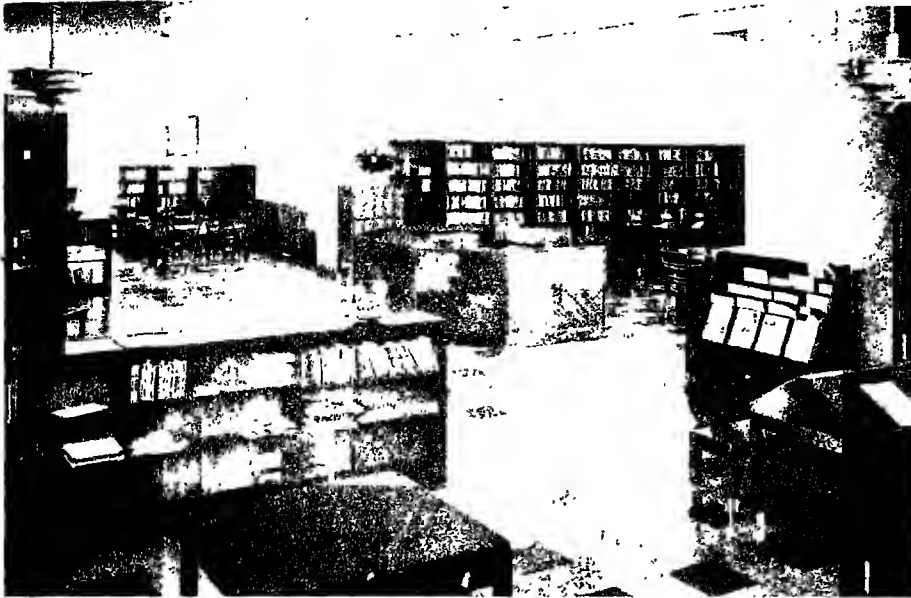
W.F. BROOKS ARCHITECT
HARTFORD CONN.

West Side Branch, Massillon, Ohio

A fine example of modernistic design which combines graceful lines with refreshing simplicity. The modernistic motif is carried out in the furniture and fixtures. Entrances to the auditorium in the basement lead through the library above, and also directly from the outside. The entire exterior of the building is of Indiana limestone. All floors of basement rooms are of asphalt tile, and all first story floors are of rubber tile. The inaccessibility of the



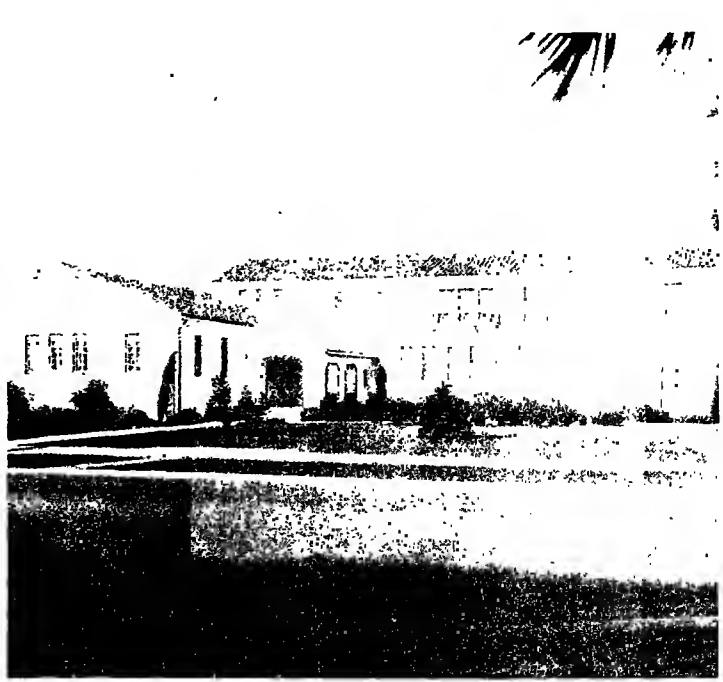
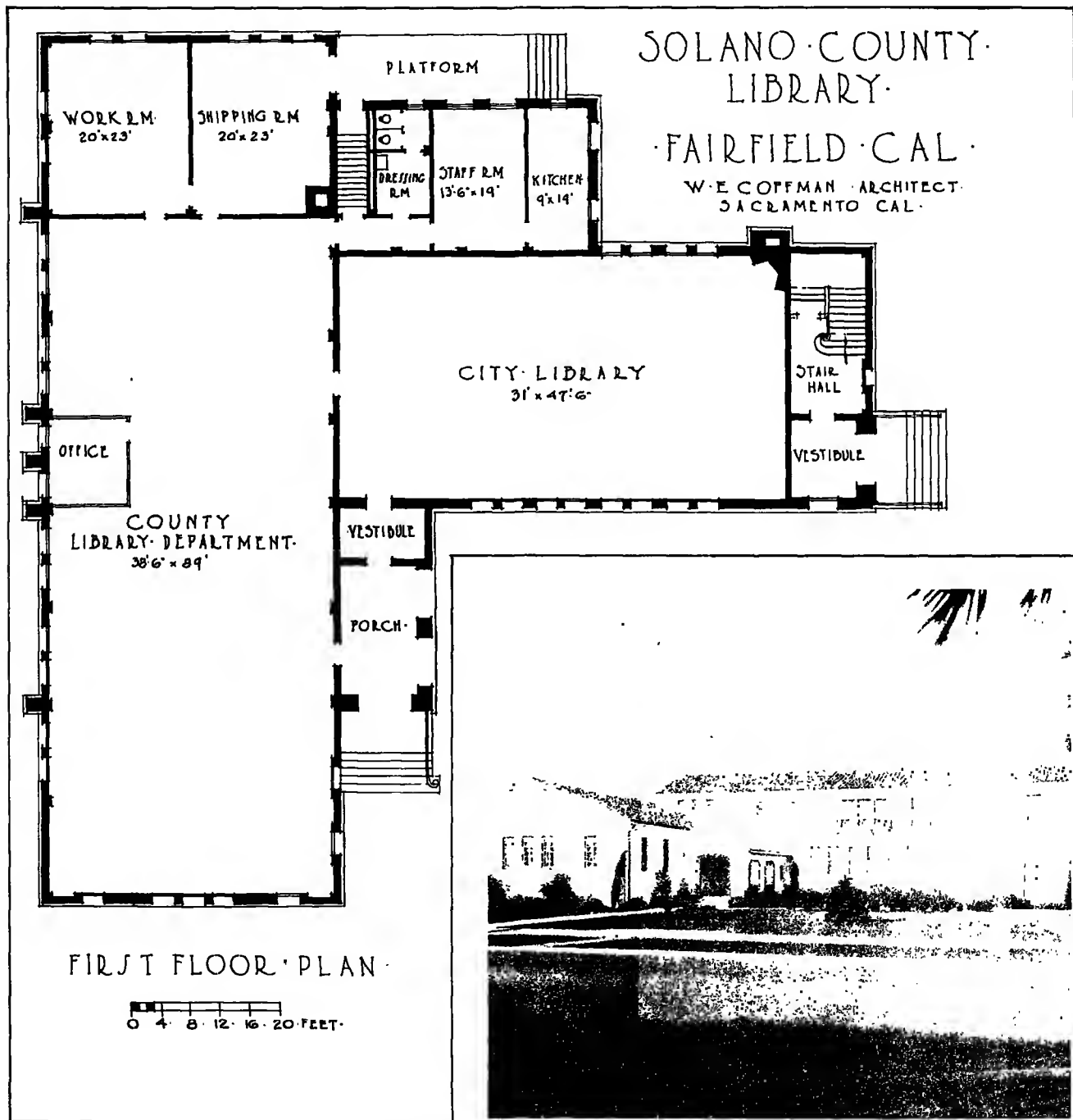
lavatories is commendable. Color is dominantly given range in beautiful veneers of the rich brown furniture, the harmonious brown and gray floor, warm in contrast to the yellowish-gray stone walls. Soft golden light floods out through louvers in the great silver electroleers.



MAIN FLOOR PLAN

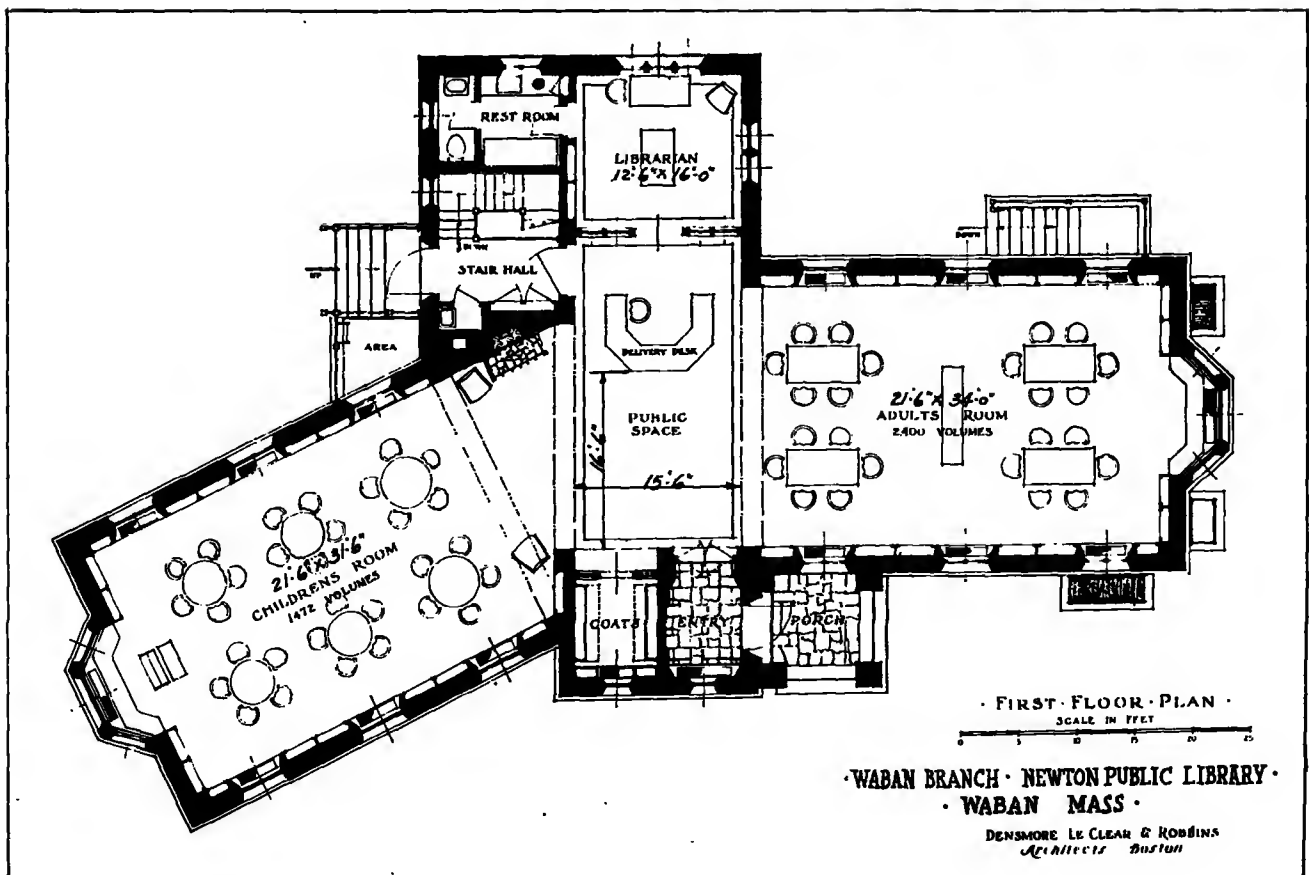
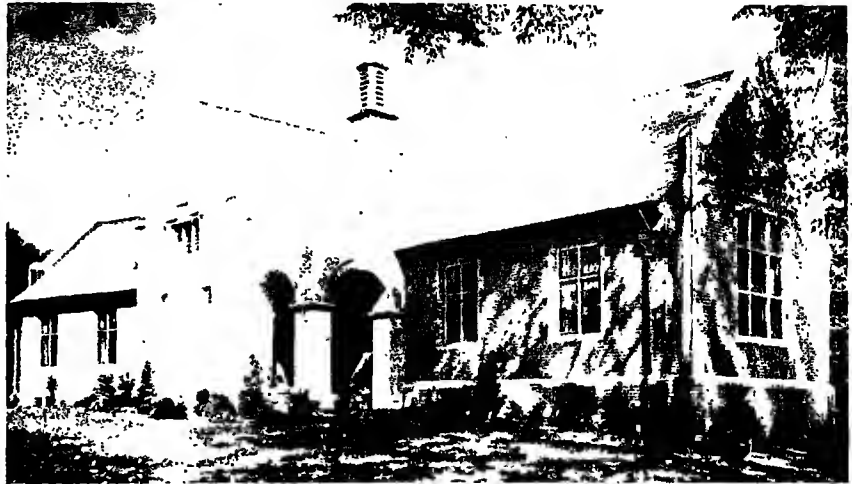
Solano County Library, Fairfield, California

The layout of this building indicates a careful plan for a county library. A maximum capacity of book shelving provides for storage of books to be distributed to schools and stations, with convenient office arrangements for such service. Packing and shipping rooms, and a platform from which trucks may be loaded without rehandling books are essentials to this type of library. An attractive public library room is provided adjacent to the county library. County offices are temporarily housed here. The charm of the building is in its successful utilization of a design and style of construction native to California.



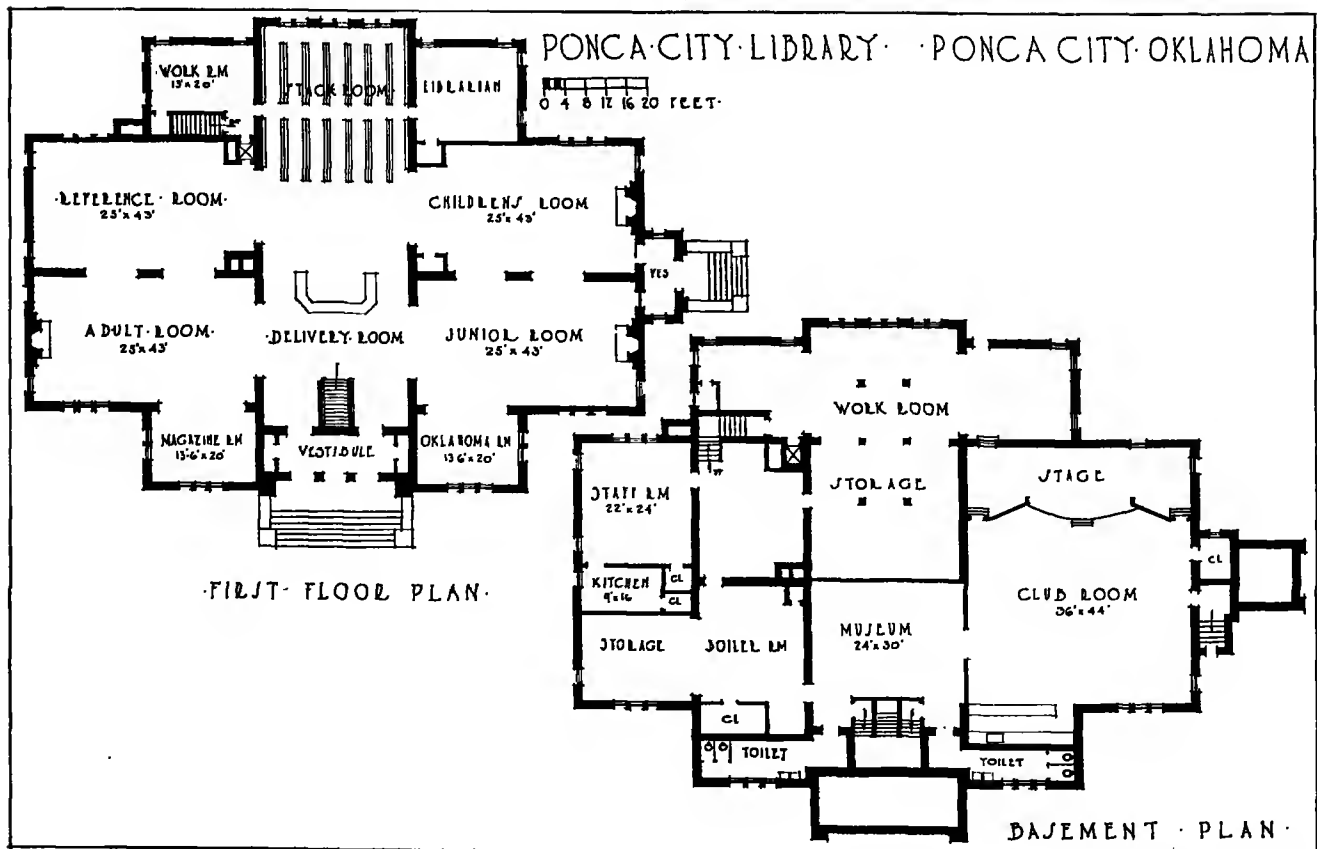
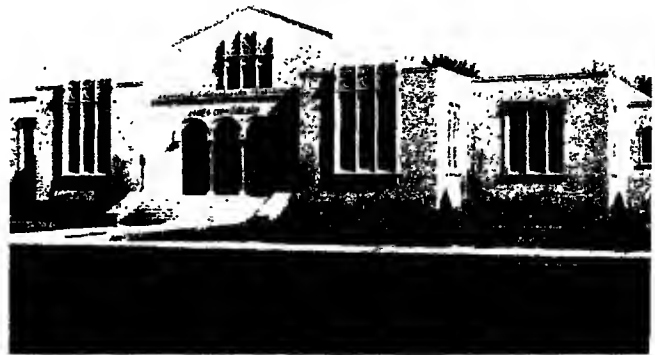
Waban Branch, Newton, Mass.

A brick building with stone trim, slate roof, copper lantern, metal casement sash, oak doors and trim. The interior is of reinforced concrete floor construction with granolithic top, finished floors being covered with linoleum; partitions and exterior walls of terra cotta; ceilings hung, metal lath and plaster; interior finish oak including encasing of trusses over the reading rooms; stone fireplace; leaded glass screen between librarian's room and delivery space; furniture oak. The delivery desk has supervision of both the adult room and the children's room, although readers in the former are not disturbed by those in the latter, since the angle at which the latter is placed prohibits even a view into the other room. An adequate well lighted lecture hall in the basement is provided with entrances both inside and outside the building. The fireplace is poorly placed. There is no real possibility of placing settees or chairs around it cozily or sequestered. This space might have been featured in some other way.



Ponca City Library, Ponca City, Oklahoma

This interesting semi-Spanish building consists of one main story and a full light basement floor. It is constructed of cream and buff bricks with terra cotta trim, striking a note of modernity in the materials used. The building is air conditioned throughout and provision made for future installation of refrigeration. The floor plan includes delivery room with stacks, the ceiling being high enough to allow for a second tier when necessary, adult reading room, junior reading room, room for small children, a reference room, two magazine nooks, librarian's office and work room. In the basement are a museum room, a club room, a stage arranged for theatrical productions, a buffet room, rest rooms, a staff room, a kitchenette, a boiler room, storage and work room. An electric lift, an electric clock, a modern incinerator, a refrigerated drinking fountain and an outside book receiver and mail chute indicate an up-to-date equipment. This plan impresses one as being difficult and expensive to supervise. The approach to the librarian's office is not direct. The location of the toilets and the museum (which is scarcely more than a corridor to the toilets), club room and boiler room, seem unsatisfactory.

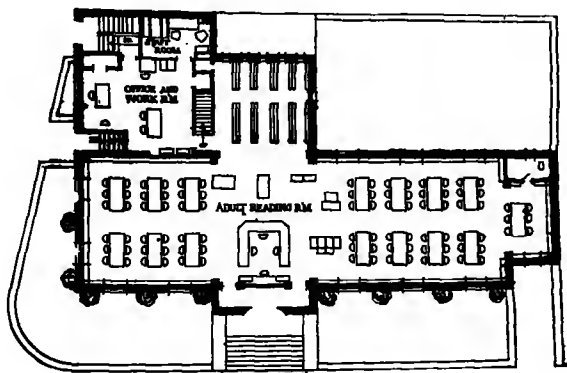
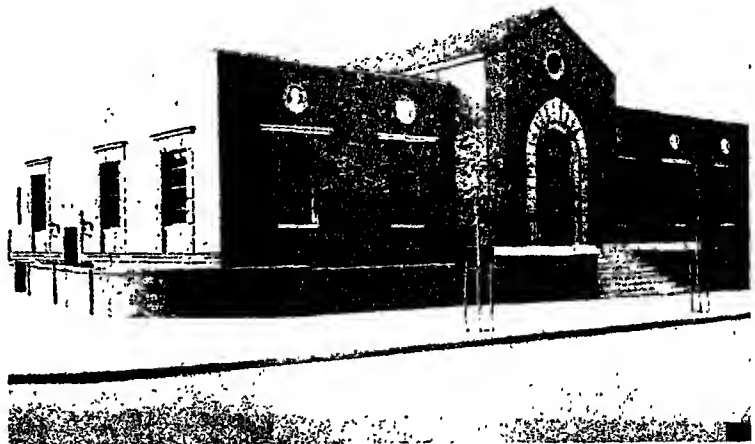


Glendale Branch, Queens Borough Public Library, New York

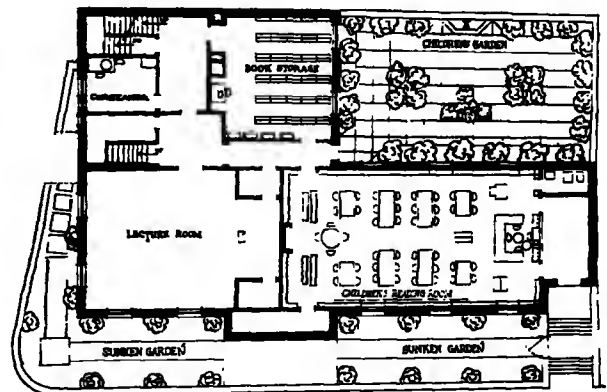
This L-shaped building of modified Italian Renaissance design consists of one story and basement. The entrance to the main floor leads directly into the adult reading room. The charging desk controls the entrance and supervision of the entire reading and reference sections of the room. A two tier stack for circulating books supplements wall shelving. The librarian's office and staff room are on this floor.

In the basement are the children's room, a lecture room, the custodian's quarters and a large storage and work room. A separate entrance to the children's room and another outside entrance directly to the lecture hall makes possible use of one without disturbance of the other. Three large windows in the children's room afford a view of the formal Italian garden, built on the level with the basement floor, surrounded by a high trellised brick and concrete wall. A flagstone surfaced court with a fountain, shrubbery and plants provide a beautiful and restful spot for a summer outdoor reading room.

A sunken garden between the building and the sidewalk on the southern and eastern end of the building provides light and ventilation to the basement floor. A brick retaining wall extends from the base of the moat to a height of approximately three feet above the level of the sidewalk.



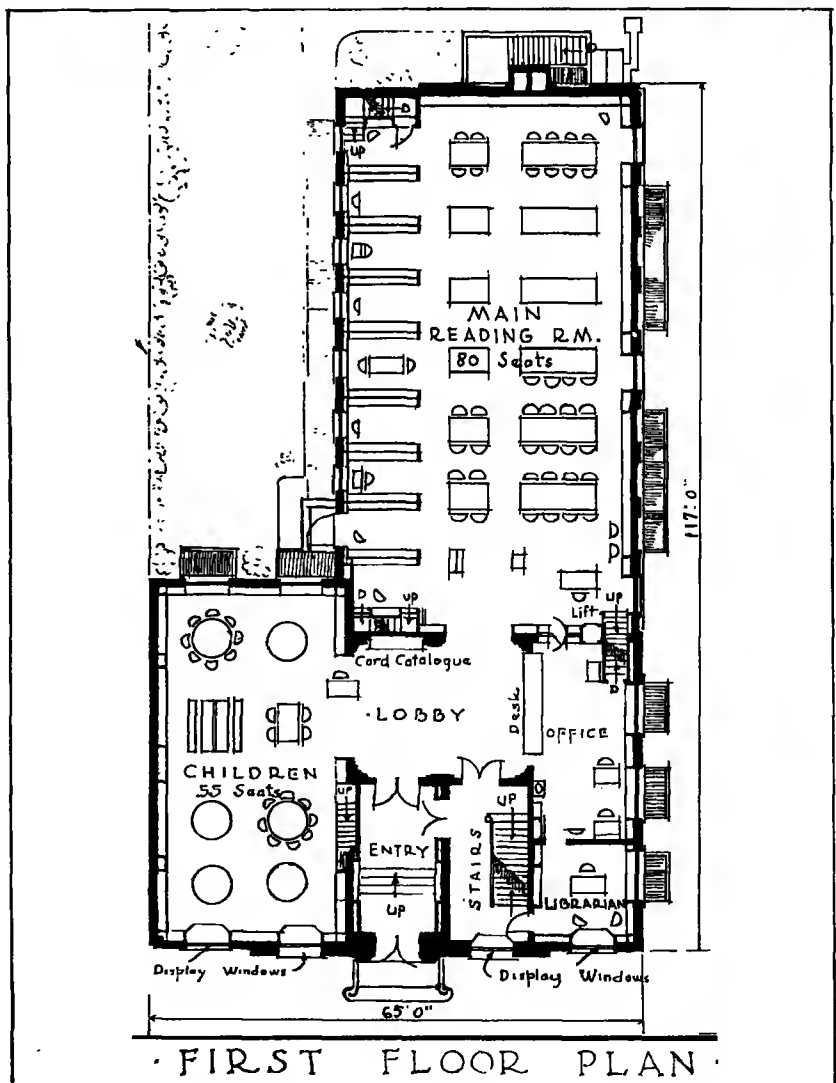
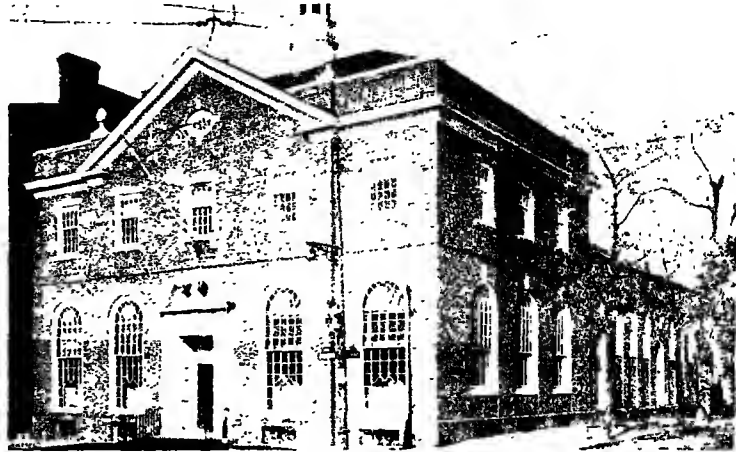
Glendale Branch



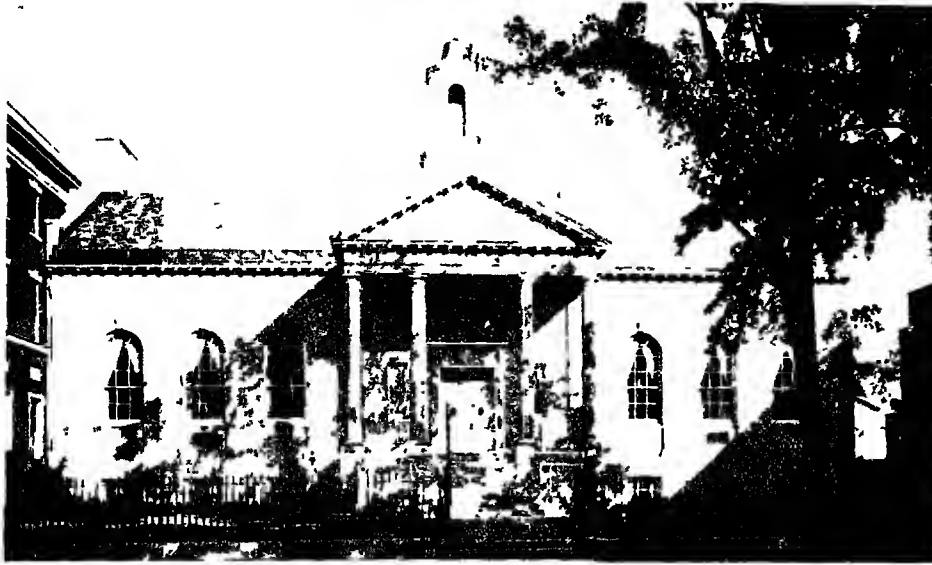
Glendale Branch

Martin Memorial Library, York, Pennsylvania

The site selected for this building is a long narrow corner lot on the principal thoroughfare, two blocks from the center of the city. The building was placed on the property line with windows so arranged as to attract passersby. The colonial style chosen for the design is characteristic of the locality. All the books are on open wood shelves which are a part of the architecture and interior decoration of the building. Balconies in the reading room and mezzanine floors provide additional shelf capacity, but greatly increase the problems of supervision and discipline. The main reading room and the children's room are on the first floor and are finished in knotty pine like that found in some of the colonial buildings. The second floor is paneled in pine painted white, following the style of some of York's oldest dwelling houses, and this part of the building will be used for art exhibitions until activities force the use of the second floor. Skillfully arranged exhibition windows have been planned along the front of the building.



Public Library, Lockport, New York



This building illustrates how an excellent site, in the very center of traffic and the crowded business district, was skillfully utilized. To avoid noise and to secure light the building was set back a reasonable distance. This created the possibility of a lawn and planting, which necessitated protection. The simple iron fence with a delicate gateway is more alluring than repelling. The very best of material and workmanship produced quality in construction. Efficiency in plan, and an inviting, homelike atmosphere support the dignity of the design. Because of a high light basement required for a community hall, readers must climb a somewhat long flight of steps to the main entrance. Narrow risers and a wide landing make the approach as easy as possible. By the H shape of the building light and air are provided on all sides of each public room. The interior has charm, beauty and as much homelikeness as is warranted in a public building. The desk commands the shelving for circulating books, and affords extensive supervision.

